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No. 90.

FALL TENDERLY, ROSES.

BY LUCIUS C. GREENWOOD.

Fall tenderly, roses, the summer is o'er,
The mist-clouds of June will grace you no more;
No more can your hearts be refreshed by their gleams,
Light zephyrs, no more, will rock you in dreams.
Breathe softly once more your fragrance o'er all,
Whose sweetness we fain would often recall;
For the fragrance born 'neath the summer skies,
Like an incense will float to Paradise.
Fade calmly and know that each of us bear
A burden of sorrow, a presence of care;
Oh, dear were the world if you were not born,
While one holds the rose, the other the thorn.
Die happy, fair roses, beneath the brown bowers!
Die sweetly, fair blossoms, queen of the flowers!
When the sunshine of June awakens again,
Oh, let not the hopes for your coming be vain!

The Flaming Talisman:

OR, THE UNFULFILLED VOW.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "THE BLACK CRESCENT," "HOODWINKED," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUEEN OF THE TAPESTRIED ROOM.

"Tis true, he ever lingers at her side,
But mark the wandering glances of his eye:
A lover near a fond and plighted bride,
With less of love than sorrow in his sigh!"
—LAWSON

"I will forget thee! All dear recollections
Pressed in my heart, like flowers within a book,
Shall be torn out and scattered to the winds!"
—LONGFELLOW.

DARKNESS, storm and wind. Fast flashed the lightning, loud the great artillery of heaven rent the storm-tossed air.

Winds were shrieking like unrested demons, and a dreary alto blended in the sounds that told of snarling wolves hied on by Jove.

It was a night of wet and chill. A quick, sharp, lurid flame—a fearful crash—the rumbling thunder shook the cowering earth; the watchman on his lonely beat felt unmanned, despite his oft-tried courage; and above the howling blast, like a sepulchral groan,

"The iron tongue of midnight had tol'd twelve!"
Close-shut in window and door, rearing its ancient angles like spectral shadows, stood a commodious, square-built house at the corner of Main and — streets, in the city of Richmond.

Its situation was rather a deserted one—a space of several lots on either side. Front, back and sides of the building were dark, gloomy; its air one of a shunned and haunted tomb.

But, in the back room of the second story sat two females.

The apartment was a broad *salon*, costily arranged; the walls draped and tapestried of Gobelin—rich buff in color, and sparkling with tiny stars; the ceiling was cased, cushion-like, with fabric of a similar shade; and an immense chandelier, depending from the middle, contained numerous burners that blazed a fragrant oil.

Ottomans were negligently placed; singularly devised matting covered the floor; stools and rugs were scattered in rich profusion here and there.

At one side was a raised couch, whose cushions and curtains matched the surrounding hues and fairly scintillated with spangles.

On this couch reclined a girl of about eighteen years.

Her complexion was faint olive, tinged with a delicate blush; the face chiseled in purest beauty. Full, red lips parted over teeth to shame the whitest ivory; eyes of jet, and brilliant as the luster of a diamond. Her hair reached below the waist—black, silken, and falling in a mossy cloud; and on her forehead, held by a band of gold, was a jeweled star, that flashed and glittered in the bright light of the chandelier.

Her habit was of black, spangled with silver—its low cut exposing a neck, throat and bust to tempt the passion of a god; and the dress being looped gradually away from the right knee, a chaste display of exquisite symmetry told of a form that equaled the face in its enrapturing loveliness.

At her side, kneeling on a stool, was a hag of sixty odd years, whose cadaverous visage told of an ill-spent life and impure heart.

Her form was long and lank; her head was covered with matted locks of gray and black; her jaws were disproportionate; her toothless gums were visible behind the shriveled lips; the nose was large, flattened until it spread upon the bronzed, sunken cheeks. Her arms were muscular, hairy, dangled limply from the short-cut sleeves of a gipsy bodice, or nervously worked about her pointed knees.

Her snaky eyes were fixed upon the beautiful girl, in whose society she seemed so strangely out of place.

"Meg," spoke the girl, toying absently with a ring upon her finger, "how strange that lives like yours and mine should be so interwoven—ah! hear the storm." Her voice was like the warble of a bird, low and sweet; its accent, as she finished, was tremulous—the tempest shook the room in which they sat.

"Yes," said the hag, her voice snappish in its bluntness; "that's a bad night. What a nice home we've got, though, eh? There's many a poor, starved soul a-trembling now; sorry wretches! But I don't pity 'em, I don't; I was like 'em once myself—but I worked up. Hey? Why don't they do it, too? Ha! ha!—because they can't. They haven't the brains. No, I don't pity 'em."

Her companion cast a quick, momentary

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Meg took her eyes from her intended victim, to look at the curtains. As she did so, the knife fell from her grasp.

glance into those devilish orbs; then shuddered, as she said:

"And there are better hearts than yours, Meg Semper, among the poor who suffer on this night."

"Better hearts? Yes—oh, no doubt. But, where does their timid heart keep them, eh? Look: in beggary, in filth, in wretchedness! See me. I'm better off than they; I struck hard for my ends, I did! Let them do it, too," and she laughed, gutturally.

The young girl was not at ease under those eyes.

"Ay, Meg Semper, you did strike hard—and wickedly. The blow that placed you amid the comforts of luxury—you who are unfit to tread a carpet that has passed through an honest man's hands!—you who are vile in heart, thought and deed, as—as—"

"As he who rules the regions of fire!" prompted Meg, hissing. "Yes, I am wicked, Orle Deice—oh, very—but I don't care. Do you hear? I don't care a straw how wicked I am!"

Again the lovely girl shuddered; again she glanced into the eyes of the hag; then she arose and began pacing the soft mat. Her right hand sought her bosom, as if to obscure what was half unseen; her head bowed in thought.

"What's the matter, now? I haven't made you angry, Orle, eh? Come, lie down again—let me look at you. I like to look at you, I do. Come."

Orle waived her hand.

"Let me alone, Meg; you unnerve me. I feel that my life is being miserably dragged out by your presence. If I were coarse and vile as you, I could endure it. But I am not; your manner grates upon my spirit. And she added, half aloud, as she resumed her walk to and fro: "Why is it fate has cast my lot with such a woman, chained me to her for life? We are not fitted for each other! She is all that bars a human being from the light and happiness of Heaven! It is strange—strange."

Meg Semper followed the movements of

the girl with her dagger-like eyes; a hideous grin settled on her countenance.

"Yes, it's strange, Orle Deice—strange. But it's so, eh? We've got to stay by each other forever! That was the oath! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Don't, Meg, don't. Let me have some respite from that terrible reminder."

"Now, don't be angry, Orle," pursued the hag, squeakingly. "I don't want to make you feel bad—"

"Hark!" interrupted Orle, pausing abruptly, in the attitude of listening.

The grin disappeared from Meg Semper's face; instead, came a glowering scowl; the bloodshot eyes burned with a Satanic glow.

"It's him!" she hissed.

"Yes, it is he," said Orle, in a low voice.

"He is coming."

"Your lover!" and the hiss was prolonged in a lasting breath.

"Reginald!" said Orle, more to herself.

"Curse him!" The hag started to her feet and took a step forward.

Orle wheeled about. Her slender figure was drawn to its full height; she raised one hand.

"Stop, Meg Semper. Leave me—leave the room."

"And leave you alone with him, eh?" in a tone that was shrill, sneering, protesting.

"Yes, alone with him. Now go."

"But I hate him!"

"No matter what you hate. It is mere keeping of a frightful oath. And have I not told you that he is mine? You must not harm him."

"Every time he comes here you keep me from him," returned the hag, in a half-fierce way. "It's no use, I tell you. I hate him! I'm bound to do it—my oath!"

"He is mine, Meg Semper—firmly. You shall not harm him. But listen: I will grant your request to-night; you may speak with him—"

"Ha!" she exclaimed, with eagerness.

"Provided you will control your hate."

You must offer him no harm. Will you promise?"

A severe conflict evidently raged within the dark bosom of the hag. Her breath came in short jerks.

There was a footfall sounding on the stairs.

"Your promise?" impatiently.

"I give it!" began Meg, though she articulated the words with difficulty.

"Enough, then; begone. Hurry. He is here."

Meg Semper hastened to the head of the couch, and, drawing aside the heavy curtains, disappeared within a concealed opening.

Another second, and there came the sound of a light knock from the opposite side of the room.

"Come in," said Orle, in her sweetest tone.

The curtains were pushed aside, discovering a door, and through this a young man entered.

Orle had regained her couch, and reclined in a graceful posture, her dark eyes, now liquid and dreamy, bent upon the comer.

Handsome in limb and feature; eyes dark, brilliant, flashing; a silken mustache gracing the upper lip; a high, broad brow, over which his jetty locks clustered in curls—a brow that bore the stamp of intellect and dissipation, at once; clothes of latest fashion; rings, pins, studs, watch-chain, prominent on his person—such was Reginald Darnley.

Midway across the room he halted, folded his arms, gazed upon her, seeming enraptured with his contemplation; and his cheeks flushed with a mastering fire.

"Reginald!" she said, gently.

Though her voice was winning as a bird-song, there was something in it which broke his enchanted reverie. The flush receded from his face, he drew a long breath and advanced, saying, simply:

"Well, Orle—I have come."

"Be seated, Reginald; draw an ottoman

to my side. I would have you sit near me."

He silently obeyed. The lustrous eyes of the beauty followed him with a yearning look.

"Reginald, you are cold this evening." He had forgotten a customary kiss.

"In heart?—yes."

A shadow of pain flitted across her face.

"And why?" biting her under lip till the warm blood seemed ready to ooze forth.

"Can you ask, Orle?"—fixing a searching gaze upon her. "Can you not imagine? You have been my queen, Orle—my fate. Your love, I know, has won me from many, very many evil habits that have made up my life; and my obligation to your soft counsel has only served to thicken a web that hovers about me. But—but—"

"Well?"

"You have done wrong—"

"Wrong?"

"In learning me to love you."

Again that shadow of pain upon the lovely features.

"Reginald?"

"When I first met you," he continued, "I became your slave—in love. Even now those bonds are not entirely broken; and they chafe me, Orle—they chafe me."

"Oh! Reginald, Reginald, what meaning is in your words? There is something behind them; there is something that makes me fear."

"Some strange influence has led us to a mutual love—"

"And it has been a happy one!" she exclaimed, quickly.

"To you—perhaps, yes. But to me, Orle, it has now become a misery. Answer me: you knew well enough that, at the time I yielded to your charms and asked you to be my wife—you knew, I say, that I was the affianced of another?"

"Yes;" her eyes drooping beneath his steady gaze.

"That first engagement has not been broken off. It never can be."

"Reginald—no—you jest—you can not mean—"

"I mean it," he interrupted. "I have been, am yet, what the world calls fast and dissipated. What little reform I have undergone, I will admit, Orle, has been of your doing; and I feel grateful. Yet, with all its copper, there is one recess in my hard heart where honor lurks. That honor calls me to a sense of duty, calls me to my first voluntary allegiance."

"You speak, now, of Cecilia Bernard. Oh! Reginald, forget her; forget that she ever lived. You are mine. No love is greater than that which binds us!"

"No, I can not forget her, nor that I have wronged her. My conscience pricks me. Pure, loving, trusting girl!—she must never know how deeply I have slighted her affection. I am going to return to her, Orle."

"No—no—no, Reginald; you must not desert me!" she cried, starting up and winding her arms about his neck.

He was upon his feet also, and looked hesitatingly down into the speaking eyes of her who clung to him.

In a moment, he said:

"You have heard, Orle; I must bid you farewell. My place is at the side of Cecilia Bernard. My love for you has been a mad infatuation—nothing more—wrought by charms no mortal could resist. You can not blame me for the step I am about to take, even though it break your heart—you who have lectured me so often upon the rewards of right and punishments of wrong. Be resigned, then."

"I can not lose you, Reginald; I can not!"

"Consider. I have loved, do love you yet. Do you think I do this, now, without a pang? My heart aches. But duty, honor, feeling for one who has trusted me, and who learned love's first lessons from my lips, is my incentive. We must part. Come, let me kiss you good-by—and let our separation be forever."

Reginald Darnley drew her to him and would have imprinted that farewell kiss upon her lips.

"Oh! no—no! no!" cried Orle. "You must not say I am to lose you! You are trifling; you would tease me. But it is a cruel tease. Leave off!"

"Not a tease, Orle, but stern truth. This is to be our last meeting."

She uttered a quick, pained cry, and clung closer to him.

"Moreover," he added, "my marriage with Cecilia Bernard is to take place at an early day—a date fixed upon long before I saw you."

"Your marriage!—no! you belong to me."

"Calm yourself. What I have said, must be."

"Reginald! Reginald! you know not what it is to love. You have taught me to love you, even as I have taught you to love me. We have exchanged vows. In many hours past, when together, the same stream of joy has borne us on its wave—the pulsations of our hearts kept time in responsive beats; our souls were chained together in an ecstasy of bliss! The same joys that delighted your breast have also intoxicated me! My life has been your life, your life has been mine! Without you I could not, would not live! Can you be so cruel, now? Say that you do not mean it. Take back your words. Tell me that you are still mine. Oh! could you but reach my heart! You can not desert me; I know you will not!"

"Orle, be calm. I foresaw this; but it could not be helped. My dream is past, and you, the bright vision of its center, must vanish from before me. Again, I say, let me kiss you good-by."

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"Reginald, oh! stop—one moment more. You know not what you do. I feel a strange fire lighting in my bosom; it spurs my tongue; I can not control it! I am not myself. Hear me—I will not part with you! You shall never wed Cecilia Bernard!"

"Orle!"

"Ay, you shall never wed her! She shall not snatch from me the only man I ever did, or ever will love!"

"Stop!"

"Before you shall lead her to the altar, my own hand shall take her life! I would remove her from my path without scruple!"

"Orle, in Heaven's name—"

"Do you hear me, Reginald? Do you comprehend? And I here swear it! Now you know what it is to love! Now you know what one will do to retain that which alone sustains life and happiness! Do not tempt me further," the dimpled arms twining still tighter around his neck, and her lustrous eyes burning strangely. "Do not drive me to madness! I already hate her. Do not make me hate you!"

"Orle, stop!"

"No—no, Reginald; you make me say these things. My words are oaths! You are mine! You are learning how a woman loves! May you never know a woman's hate! Cecilia Bernard shall not stand between us! She shall die first! I, Orle Deice, claim you before all women! You are mine! Remember—I will never give you up!"

Her arms suddenly withdrew from his neck.

Her passionate utterances rung in his ear like a threatening knell; he bowed his face in his hands, as if to shut out sight of the lovely being who spoke words in such strange contrast with her nature.

A faint, rustling noise aroused him.

He looked up; then started back agast. Orle had disappeared.

Before him stood Meg Semper, a hideous shape, whose ghost-like presence, for the moment, terrified him, brought a cold perspiration to his brow.

She stood, with her brawny arms folded, gazing fixedly at him.

The young man was staggered. Had he got into a den of sorcery? Was Orle, after all, but a beautiful fiend who would have charmed him to ruin, and now, in the impulse of hate, had assumed her natural shape of horror?

But no; that age is past. The horrible thing before him was flesh and blood—a human being of fearful aspect.

"Woman! Ha! Who are you?" sprung from and died huskily on his lips.

"Ha! ha! ha!" she laughed, dismally.

"Who am I? I'm Meg Semper. You don't know me, eh? No. You never saw me. But I've seen you; I've seen your father, too. I've kept close to you for the last two years. I have. What for? But, you'll learn soon enough. Take a good look at me. I'm going to be your death!"

She advanced a step, and he recoiled before her.

Her ugly mien, her grating voice, her significant words awed, startled him.

He was now speechless, yet alive to a sense of danger which he read in her leering eyes.

"I say I'm going to be your death!" she screamed. "Do you know what death is? Hey?"

"Woman, keep off! What fiend sent you here? What mean you?"

A rage of hate turmoilled in the shrunken bosom of the hag.

Perhaps she thought of her promise to Orle. But if so, then that promise was burned out by a dire, malignant flame.

She advanced another step. Reginald was transfixed; her eyes, like the orbs of a serpent, held him spell-bound, powerless to move.

"I'm bound to take your life! I'm bound to take the life of all named Darnley!—of all who know a favor at the hands of a Darnley! Hear me, eh? You must die!"

"Die! Woman, you are mad! You are possessed of devils! Keep off! God! what are you doing?"

Meg Semper's hand had sought the folds of her dress. Slowly she drew forth a long, glistening knife.

Her eyes blazed like those of a tiger; her other hand worked convulsively, as if she longed to tear him to pieces.

Pale and shuddering, he watched the knife as it ascended, and the hag seemed gathering herself for a spring. His heart was in his throat.

Nearer she came—the dread steel flashing aloft. He would have cried out, but his tongue was paralyzed.

"I say I'm bound to kill you!"—in a shrill whisper. "It's my oath; and I'm going to keep it! This knife is to do it! Hear? Ha! ha!—the first blow in keeping with my oath—"

But the last words froze upon her thin lips.

"There was a sharp, reverberating 'click' behind Reginald.

Meg Semper took her eyes from her intended victim, to look at the curtains. As she did so, the upraised knife fell from her grasp; her eyes seemed starting from their sockets; her red face actually purpled.

That which she saw was a small, white wrist and hand, and in the hand was what appeared to be a single tongue of golden flame ascending from the center of the palm to the finger-tips—the lapping thumb evidently supporting it in that position.

Only for an instant was the mysterious thing visible—seemingly surrounded by a faint, glimmering halo—and then it was gone.

Simultaneously with its vanishment, the hag uttered a cry that was more like the howl of a beast, and sunk forward on the floor.

The spell thus broken, Reginald Darnley paused to bestow one look upon the limp, prostrate form, and then, with a combined feeling of terror and superstition, wrestling with his nerves, he rushed from the room, from the house, out into the tempest of wind and rain.

Meg Semper was not insensible through fear or dread at sight of the flaming talisman—nor was she insensible at all, except it be for a moment, and this was caused by the overwhelming reaction, the silent significance of the mysterious apparition, which forbade the deed of blood.

So determined, so fixed was she upon the sacrifice of Reginald's life, in keeping with some terrible oath, that the sudden check in her heated veins; her vision swam in a rage of disappointment; her Satanic heart leaped in chagrin at the failure before her; her limbs gave way, and she fell, helpless.

She did not lie in that position long.

The young man had scarce gone, when she sprung to her feet, and snatching up

the knife, clutched its bone handle with an angry grip.

She glared about her, as if seeking for another object in whose flesh to sink the blade.

Orle stood near her; and the hag's eyes fixed upon the girl in a savage, piercing gaze, while she fingered the knife uneasily.

"You did it, Orle Deice; you did it, I say! Friends alive!—what for? Eh, what for?" advancing and grasping the other, rudely.

Orle shivered as the icy fingers closed upon her wrist; but with a wrench, she threw off the hold, and said, sternly:

"You forget yourself, Meg Semper! You look as if you would like nothing better than to kill me!"

"And maybe I would—maybe I would!" slowly, and a devilish glitter in her eyes.

"In payment for my having thwarted your intent toward Reginald? But enough. Put away your weapon. You dare not harm me; you know it—you who hold oaths so sacred."

"Yes, Orle"—submissively—"I can't harm you. And I won't. You needn't fear of it. I'll stand by my oath; and in doing that"—the eyes again kindling—"I've got to kill Reginald Darnley!—and after him, Mervin Darnley! Do you hear? I must do it!"

"Beware! I tell you, Meg Semper, he is mine! Remember—the Talisman!"

"Yes, yes!" she screamed. "And that's another! Ha! ha!—only three left now!—only three! It's saved his life twice. Ugh! feel sick when I see the thing; it makes me mad!—mad!"

"Never mind; we have had enough of this—"

"What now? Your lover's give you the mit. There's a row! What'll you do next?"

Orle was looking down at the matted floor.

"Cecilia Bernard must be taken away from Reginald," she said, musingly.

"Right away!" acquiesced the hag, eagerly. "Yes; take every thing away from him!—take his life!"

"Where is Nemil?"

"Gone to bed—surly dog! He's tired out running errands."

"This must be done speedily," thinking deeper.

"Without delay!" Meg said, as if to clinch it.

"No more, Meg. We must wait. You may go to bed. Hark!—the bells. It is one o'clock. Do not forget, I want to talk with you and Nemil in the morning!"

There were several doors leading from the salon, hidden by the rich draperies, and through one of these Meg Semper disappeared, muttering as she went:

"Oho! now—if she only knew! If she only knew the little game I've been playing to-day! If she only knew of the mischief I've done at the house of the Darnleys! But I've sworn to kill him! I'll do it yet! Only three left—and if she don't watch me close, then—ha! he! he! Meg Semper knows what she's about. Her lover?—bah! who cares?"

She left the beautiful girl alone and thinking upon a plan to prevent Reginald's marriage with Cecilia Bernard.

"Oh! how I have loved him!" was the warm, passionate utterance that fell from her lips as she walked the room, in solitude.

"How I have learned to idolize him!—to look upon him as all mine!—all mine! And now he would desert me, would throw me aside, to return to that baby-faced girl! Never!—he shall not do it. Reginald is mine. I have won him—he is mine!"

CHAPTER II.

THE ANGERED FATHER.

"And thus the frowning brow, the restless form, And threatening glance, foretold domestic storm."

—CHABRE.

"If I can catch him once upon the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him."

—SHAKESPEARE.

The brazen tongues of city clocks were tolling forth the hour of one.

From a window in the second story of a stately residence, situated near a mile from where our story opened, a glimmering light streamed forth to the pavement below.

Within the room an elderly gentleman paced back and forth, restlessly.

His mien was commanding, his features stern and rigid; his teeth were locked tightly, and as we mark the darting fire of the gray eyes, half hidden beneath the bristling eyebrows, we can see that he is excited, that he is laboring under the severe tax of pent-up irritability.

Presently, he grasped and pulled the bell-cord, with a quick, violent jerk.

"Has he come?" to the bowing servant who soon appeared.

"No, sir." And, as there was no further question, the man withdrew.

Whom we have introduced was a man of means, position and influence—Mervin Darnley, a retired manufacturer, father of Reginald.

He had separated from his wife many years prior to the events about to be related, and the separation was caused by heat of domestic discord.

That parting of man and wife, in a spirit of enmity, has much to do with our narrative.

The family now consisted only of himself and Reginald, besides the numerous household servants.

Something has happened to mar his usually calm exterior. Perhaps it was the perfumed billet he held in his hand, reading and rereading it, then crumpling and crumpling it, alternately groaning and sighing as he continued his walk from side to side across the apartment.

Half an hour passed. Still he trod the carpet with uneven steps, and the lamp-jet flickered and sputtered as it burned lower.

At the expiration of the time named, the servant reappeared, to say:

"He's come, sir."

"Good. I'm glad of it. I'm worn out. You have your orders—be quick, sirrah!"

Another period of impatient waiting, and Reginald Darnley entered the presence of his father.

His face was pale, his nerves were unsteady. Fresh from the ordeal of our previous chapter, his mind was not yet balanced in quietness; and the unusual circumstance of Mervin Darnley sitting up, wishing to see him, at that late hour, filled him with uncertain conjectures.

"I am at your service, father."

Be seated, Reginald.

He drew up a chair before his son, and bent those keen, gray eyes upon him, sharply.

"How was for the moment, calm."

"This is rather an unusual hour to be roaming through the streets of Richmond, Reginald—midnight! I do not like it!"

"I was with friends."

"Friends! Who?"

"Oh, old acquaintances."

"Where were they? Where were you?"

Reginald Darnley hesitated.

A new frown wrinkled the father's brow; he started from his chair, and cried:

"Look, now—you blush to mention the companions with whom you have revelled until midnight. But I know enough. You were with those who, of late, have become your sole associates—and what are they?"

"The sum and dregs of the foulest who swarm in our midst—the despised, the vulgar, the blasphemous, the shameless!"

The hot blood rushed to the young man's face. He dared not deny this. Prior to visiting Orle Deice, he had passed the evening at the tables of a saloon whose notoriety as a sink of guilt and polished vice was wide-spread; he had staked and won, staked and lost, at cards, at dice, at monte; and betting with the wildest was his love, or hazarding the closest pleased him most.

As Reginald crimsoned under the realization that his vile habits were known to Darnley, senior, the aged parent continued, growing warmer with his speech:

"Yes, sirrah, you have been at the gaming-table! You have fallen into a circle accursed in the eyes of God and all honest men! What have you to say? I have waited here, for hours, to speak upon the matter, and to shame you! Ay, to shame you!" Then up and down, back and forth, to and fro, went the old gentleman, chafing in the subject of his rebuke.

"But, father, hear me for a moment. Since you have discovered that which I had hoped to conceal from you, I at least insist—"

"Insist, sir! What do you insist?"

"That you hear my excuses."

"Excuses!"—pausing with an abruptness that said he doubted his ears; "excuses, dev— What would you excuse? You fasten a slur to your character, willfully, headstrong; you carry the name of Darnley among gamblers, cut-throats, and the like—you are one of them yourself; you mar the reputation of one of the eldest families in Richmond—and now you cry excuses?"

"Not! There's no weight in excuses; not a bit of it, sir—not a bit of it!"

"You are severe?" said Reginald, calmly, though his face flushed and paled by turns at this tirade.

"Severe? No—I am too lenient. Listen: I know more yet. Who is Orle Deice?"

"Orle Deice!" he repeated, quickly, half arising, for the mention of the name was so unexpected that it startled him.

"That is Orle Deice. Ha! I have you. Who is she?"

"She is a pure and beautiful girl," was the prompt, earnest reply.

Darnley senior appeared momentarily dumb-struck. Then he cried, sneeringly:

"Pure and beautiful! Oh, yes—very pure and beautiful! But I wish I could believe it. You are the affianced of Cecilia Bernard; yet you visit this girl—or woman. I suppose you are in love with her; you prove yourself a grand rascal; you—read that, and then tell me what you think of yourself."

As he handed the young man the crumpled, disfigured billet which, up to this time, he held in his hand, squeezing and fingering it as if it were a living thing striving to escape him, he sunk, with a groaning sign, into the nearest chair, and remained silent, watching his wayward son, while the latter perused the delicately-penned and half-obliterated lines.

The note ran thus:

"Mr. Mervin Darnley:

"It is with regret I write to inform you that your son is indebted to me in the sum of one thousand dollars. It is a loan—can be proved, if necessary; but I do not care to expose your son through the action of a lawyer. He does not seem inclined to cancel his obligation, and I am forced to this course by unlooked-for circumstances. Let me hope you will pay the money to the bearer, who can hand you my receipt for the same. Respectfully,

"ORLE DEICE."

When he had read this, his brain was filled with incredulity.

"Impossible!" he thought; "I can not believe it! Orle would not do it! When, in the impetus of despair incident to my losses at gaming, I borrowed that money of her, she said she did not wish me to return it. If she does want it, after saying that, why did she not speak of it to me to-night? There is some mystery here."

But he saw that his father was angered, saw that Mervin Darnley was set in the opinion that Orle Deice was not what she should be. He knew that an effort to convince Darnley, senior, of Orle's good character, would be useless; and finally, he easily perceived that protestations of ignorance would not avail.

Still, he ventured:

"How came you by this infamous letter?"

"It was brought me by a negro—an intelligent fellow, but a miserable dog nevertheless! Now, then, do you marvel that I am aroused? Zounds! What have you to say?"

"Yes, there is a mystery in this!" mused Reginald, inwardly. "A negro? Who could it have been? Who sent him? I can not, will not believe it was Orle!" then aloud: "Well, and what did you do about it?"

"Paid him. Paid him, and took a receipt—he had it, already written, in his pocket; then I kicked him from the house!" the last with emphasis.

"In that you did wrong? What do you mean by that? Wrong in kicking a scoundrel?"

"No; wrong in paying the money."

"Explain, if you can. Dare you deny your indebtedness to this woman—this—"

"I can and do deny it. I have never met with a woman whose name is Orle Deice."

"What! Then, why—how do you know she is 'pure and beautiful'? Answer that."

"Oh, mere rumor," with an attempt at nonchalance. "Therefore, it is impossible that I should have fallen her debtor."

Reginald was playing close, hazardous—fatally.

"In short," he added, after a pause; "the whole affair is a piece of imposition."

Darnley snatched the letter from his son's hand, and glanced at it again, for the hundredth time.

"No!" he exclaimed, vehemently; "the chirography is natural, the wording is business-like. To clinch the matter, I saw you, with my own eyes, only this night, enter a gaming saloon. The more I think of it, the more I—by Heaven! Reginald, I believe you are both rascal and hypocrite!"

Reginald frowned; but it was lost upon the irate parent.

"That letter is a fabricated lie!" declared the young man, with an effort at self-possession. "If my denial does not outweigh your prejudice, I can say no more."

"You deny all knowledge of this woman?—of this debt?"

"I do."

But Mervin Darnley was too familiar with the page-print of a human face, to be so easily deceived. He read the lie that came from his son's lips.

"I have no more to say. You may go," brief, blunt, positive, significant.

Reginald, without another word, quitted the room, glad to escape the embarrassment that was fast coming upon him.

Mervin Darnley jerked the bell-rope, for, perhaps, the sixth time within two hours, and resumed his strolling.

"Tell Reginald, Darnley's valet that I wish to speak to him," was his order.

The valet came.

Of medium height, strangely resembling Reginald in the outline of his features, though he was beardless; on one cheek an ugly scar very near three inches long; oily in voice, polite in manner, bending low before the manufacturer—this was Herwin Reese, valet to young Darnley.

"Sir, you sent for me," bowing, and pausing near the center of the apartment.

"Yes. Are you not with Reginald almost constantly?"

"Unfortunately, yes," was the hesitating reply.

"Ha! Unfortunately? Now I have it! Why unfortunately?"

"For many reasons. First—" he stopped short and glanced uneasily at the door.

Darnley was in no mood to waste time.

"There's no one there. Go on—quick!"

"I fear I am not at liberty to expose Mr. Darnley's affairs," demurred the valet.

"Liberty, the devil! I am his father; I have a right to know. Now, out with it—why unfortunately?"

"First, because I have witnessed habits of carelessness and vice."

"Answer me this: does he know a woman named Orle Deice?"

Herwin Reese bowed again, and replied:

"Yes."

The valet's eyes glittered singularly as they bent upon the carpet. Evidently, the catching afforded him a secret pleasure.

"Is he intimate with her?"

"Oh, very! I have accompanied him often on his visits to the girl, whom, I know, he loves deeply."

Darnley buried his face in his hands and groaned again. Then looking up:

"And do you know whether he owed her any money?"

"A thousand dollars." The answer was prompt.

"Oh! God!" wailed the old gentleman, as all was herein substantiated; his son proven a liar; his whirling senses sent half-frantic—for it cut deep, deep to his heart.

"That will do. Go—leave me," he said, at last, in a broken voice.

Herwin Reese, as he departed, was secretly jubilant. He had, with affected unwillingness, added fuel to the flame of quarrel between father and son.

As he turned his back upon Darnley, the subtle gleam of his eyes betrayed a brimming exultation; the smooth lips curled in a sardonic smile.

"Ah!" he thought; "all works well. Our plot starts finely, Meg Semper. Now, if it will only go on—how much better to destroy him in this way. This is not an end of the quarrel. I'll wager upon what I know of Mervin Darnley's temper, that Reginald's prospects are dark! Another day will show it—another day! This scar upon my cheek still burns and smart, Reginald Darnley! I have not forgotten, in a short year, how to hate! Meg Semper would keep her oath! But how much better to follow out my plan! Ha! ha!—an inward chuckle—"your doom is closing in fast!"

The entry lamps had been extinguished; a thick darkness prevailed, and as the valet emerged from the room, he shivered involuntarily.

Whether he imagined a lurking presence ready to seize upon his flesh, or a hiding specter about to glide out from one of the numerous by-passages or branching stairways, to dog his footsteps—which, we do not venture, but from some cause, he felt anxious to reach a place where there was light.

Not a dozen steps were taken, when he came in contact with something which brought him to a sudden, jarring halt. He raised his hand; it touched a human face.

Herwin Reese was no coward, but he recoiled from this unpleasant encounter.

A hand clutched his collar; a voice said:

"Come!"

Reese was bewildered; and in this bewildered state, he was pulled, jerked, hurried along the dark entry at a breakneck rate.

When they reached the main hall, he uttered an exclamation that contained more than astonishment.

"Why, Master Reginald, what can you—can this be?"

"Silence, wretch!" still urging the other onward.

"But what have I—"

"Silence, I say!"

Passing the portly servant, who dozed unconsciously in his large arm-chair, Reginald Darnley continued out to the balustraded steps, and there released the valet.

"Master Reginald—" began Reese, for the third time; but he was again interrupted.

"Wretch! Villain! Scoundrel!" cried the young man, in a rage. "So you've betrayed me, have you? You've turned informer!"

"Sir—Master Reginald—no, I—"

"Liar! I heard you. You substantiated all my father's suspicions!—miserable dog!"

"Ay, Master Reginald, I am a dog," but his eyes kindled as he bowed in mock humility.

"I heard all—I stood outside the door. Rascal!"

"Call me rascal, too, if you will; you have done it before."

"And if I had a knife, I'd lay open your other cheek!" pursued Reginald, boiling with passion. "I'd give you another scar like that you received at my hands, a year ago!"

Herwin Reese was silent; but his breast was firing, his breathing was hard.

"You are dismissed. I'll have you no longer near me. I owe you a small balance—come to-morrow and get it, and take away your wardrobe at the same time. Now go, before I kick you from the steps!"

"Kick me?"

"Yes, scoundrel!—kick you!" and he dealt the valet a fierce blow, accompanied by a kick.

Herwin Reese spun round like top; then tripped and rolled down to the pavement, where he lay, partly stunned.

When he recovered his senses, the front door was closed, silence reigned about him.

"So!" he broke forth, grinding his teeth till they seemed ready to snap; "you'll kick me? I am dismissed? So be it. I don't care much. I'll triumph yet. There are other ways to strike at you, since I am no longer in your employ! I will have my revenge for this knife-cut on the cheek—and it shall be sweet—sweet!"

Adieu, Darnleys, both a father and son, you are doomed! Meg Semper lives to keep her pledge to the Creole beauty! Demanded are you; and Herwin Reese can aid! Ha! ha! beware!

He shook his fist at the gloomy building, his eyes dancing like the embers of a hearth.

Then he turned away.

Striding rapidly along for several squares, he at last entered a broad alley, or court; from this, he turned into another alley, running at angles, narrower, much darker.

Through the unlighted avenue, through a sickly atmosphere, his bare head wet and cold in the storm that now was lulling gradually—on went Herwin Reese. Presently, he halted before the back basement entrance to a large edifice—the house in which lived Orle Deice.

Advancing to the door, he gave a peculiar knock.

In a moment he heard the shuffling of feet; in another moment the bolts were drawn, and the cracked, harsh, snapping voice of Meg Semper cried:

"Well, now, what's this? What's the matter at this hour of the night, when I'm just going to bed, eh? It's you, Herwin Reese?"

"Yes, it's me," answered the valet. "It's Herwin Reese, drenched, soaking wet, and in a rage! Let me get in here, and ask your questions afterward."

(To be continued.)

The Dark Secret: OR, The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON,
(MRS. MAY AGENE FLETCHER.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE MIDNIGHT MURDER.

"The midnight hour will soon be here— That awful hour! When graves yawn wide and the dead occupants Mingle with earthly life."

"Lift her up," said the loud, harsh voice of Grizzle; "she has ruptured an artery—that is all."

She attempted to lift her herself, as she spoke, but she was furiously hurled back by Mr. De Vere.



"Shan't I go for a doctor, uncle?" said Frank, looking daggers at Grizzle. "And I can bring a constable up from Green Creek at the same time, and fix this old witch's flint for her."

"No, wait, Frank; don't go," said the voice of Jacquetta. "Don't go yet. Augusta is recovering. We must hear what she says before you go for any one."

Her words banished every thing from the minds of all but anxiety for Augusta. All gathered around her sofa as she slowly opened her heavy, dark eyes, and looked dimly around.

"Augusta, darling—my precious child! are you better?" said her father, in a choking voice, as he knelt down beside her and took her hand.

She passed her hand in a vague, lost sort of way across her forehead, as if trying to recall something that had escaped her memory.

"I thought—I thought—something happened, papa, didn't it?" she said, confusedly. "Do not talk—lie still. You have hurt yourself, dearest. Shall we send for a doctor?" said Jacquetta, softly kissing the pale lips.

The wandering eyes still roved confusedly around, and the pale fingers still passed wistfully over the pale brow. Grizzle Howlett arose noiselessly from her seat, and her tall form, towering upward like a grim, gray stone statue, at last arrested the lost, vacant gaze.

Slowly over the beautiful face again settled that look of utter, voiceless, awful horror. The small hands closed and clenched until the nails pierced the delicate palms, the slight form grew rigid and death-like, and a grayness, like that of approaching dissolution, crept over every feature. Once or twice she essayed to speak, but only a choking, dying sound came forth from her blanched lips; and in the glazing eyes and colorless face, over every other feeling, still came that dreadful look of unutterable horror.

"Augusta, dearest! Oh, heavens! Augusta, what is the meaning of this?" gasped Jacquetta, in terror.

"Oh, my God! what have I done!" came in a low, wailing, passionate cry of utter despair, from the white lips of Lady Augusta.

"Oh, my sister! my darling sister!" cried Jacquetta, wringing her pale fingers, while the others seemed unable to speak, "what is this? Oh, Augusta, what does this mean?"

"What! I would strike you dead with horror to hear! What! I would sooner be bound at the stake than reveal! What will blight my life, lose my soul, consume my heart, make every moment of my life a torture such as you can not even conceive of! May God grant me a speedy death!" she cried, passionately; and then, dropping her upraised arm, she sunk back, deathlike, and collapsed.

"Oh, Heaven help us! she has gone crazy!" said Jacquetta, still wringing her pale fingers in the first paroxysm of her terror and alarm; while her father knelt, with his face hidden in his hands, in speechless grief; and Disbrowe and Frank looked on in consternation.

"She is not crazy," interrupted the harsh, impatient voice of Grizzle; "she is as sane as you, and speaks the truth. Peace!" she said, impetuously, as they would have interrupted her. "I will speak to her, and end this scene. Miss Augusta De Vere, listen to me! Ah! I see you are doing it," she said, with her customary sneer, as she beheld the wild, dark eyes riveted with a strange, stony glare, to her face. "Your father wants to imprison me on suspicion of robbery and murder, and if he does, you know the alternative! One word from you will effect my release—and I await that word!"

She folded her mantle closer around her tall, gaunt form, and stood stiff and statue-like in her usual bolt, upright fashion, waiting as calmly as though it were the simplest matter in the world.

"Papa! papa! let her go! let her go! at once! My eyes loathe the sight of her!" cried Augusta, clasping her hands over her eyes, with a shudder that shook her whole frame.

"Let her go? Never! the accursed hag!" cried her father, starting up. "She shall swing for what she has done, as sure as there is law or justice in the land!"

"Papa!" almost shrieked Augusta, half-springing to her feet, "you do not know what you are saying. Papa! would you kill me? Oh! let her go at once—for my sake—for your own sake—for God's sake! let her go!" she cried, falling from her seat prostrate on the floor at his feet.

"Augusta, you do not know what you are saying," said her father, almost sternly, as he raised her up. "This woman is a murderer!"

"And your daughter is worse!" she passionately cried, flinging herself on the sofa, and then starting up again, as if deranged by some inward, gnawing, unutterable pain. "Oh, saints in heaven! what will become of me? Papa! papa! let her go, if you would not see me dead at your feet!"

She was terrific to look at, as she bent her clenched hand on her breast, and tore at it as if she would have plucked out the unendurable agony gnawing there; her eyes starting from their very sockets; her face as awfully white as that of a galvanized corpse. Even Jacquetta shrank a step or two from her, in momentary horror.

"Mr. De Vere, and you all," cried Grizzle, with one of her slow, majestic waves of the arm, and in the measured, commanding tones she had formerly used on the stage, "listen to me. You see the power I have over this naughty girl—a real power; for, mark you, it is no imaginary crime she accuses herself of, but one that would curdle your heart's blood with horror to hear—no so awful that it is *nameless*! Yes; so seldom is it heard of, that no name has ever been given to it. And now, Robert De Vere, proud son of a proud sire, as sure as heaven is above us, if you do not let me go forth free, this secret sin shall be blown over the length and breadth of the land, so your everlasting disgrace, and that of all who bear your name. Refuse, and your daughter will either go mad or die at your feet! Look at her, and see if she is not on the verge of madness now! Consent, and I will give you my word—and, what is more, will keep it, too—never to molest any traveler or wayfarer who may stop at my house again—never! I confess there was one—but only one—we robbed and *silenced*; and it is true that this nephew of yours might have shared the same fate, but for something like a providential interposition—if one believed in such things. But let me go free, and I faithfully promise to keep your daughter's secret, and never to molest any one again. Refuse me, and it will be at your peril!"

"Let her go, for Heaven's sake!" exclaimed Disbrowe, "before you drive your daughter insane. What is her life, or that of a dozen miserable wretches like her, compared to that of my cousin?"

Grizzle turned her eyes on him with her sneering smile, and seemed about to reply; but, whether intimidated by the bright, fierce light in the young soldier's eye, or unwilling to irritate him further, she prudently thought better of it, and discreetly held her tongue.

"Go, then," said Mr. De Vere, trembling with rage and anguish; "and may Heaven's worst curses go with you!"

Grizzle smiled slightly and bowed, and met Jacquetta's flashing eye with a look of exultant triumph. Returning it with one of mingled defiance and disgust, the young girl made her stern motion to go, and, unlocking the door, held it open for her to pass.

"You wear your chains so gracefully, my pretty little dear," said Grizzle, as she went out, "that I don't know any one better qualified to teach your sister the virtue of resignation. Whoever would imagine you to be—what you are?"

"Begone!" exclaimed Jacquetta, stamping her foot passionately.

With one of her short, scornful laughs, so galling to listen to, the woman passed out; and Jacquetta, turning suddenly round, met the eyes of Disbrowe fixed full upon her as if in wonder at the last words.

To his surprise, her bold, bright glance fell, and her face, a moment before deadly pale, grew deepest crimson—crimson to the very edges of her hair—as she turned away and averted her head.

Augusta had thrown herself on her face, on the sofa, as the woman went out; and now lay as still as if the speedy death she had prayed for had already mercifully settled her agonized heart-throbs.

Tenderly Jacquetta bent over her, and essayed to raise her up.

"Augusta, dearest, what is it? Oh, tell me—tell your father! Do not look so dreadfully!" she said, impudently.

"Oh, let me go to my room!" Do not speak to me, or I shall die!" she cried out, rising up, and holding out her hands before her, like one blind.

"Come, then; let me help you," said Jacquetta, passing her arm round her waist.

As she turned to obey, her eye fell on her father, sitting bowed down in a chair, his face hidden in his hands. The next instant, she was kneeling at his feet, clasping his knees.

"Papa, dearest papa, speak to me, your own Augusta! Oh, papa, do not say you curse me for what I have done!"

"Curse you, my darling child?" he said, looking sorrowfully up. "Oh, Augusta, what have you done? What is this you have done?"

"Oh, papa, do not ask me!" she exclaimed, in a dying, despairing voice. "It would kill you to know! Only say that, if ever you do hear of it, never tell a soul, you will not curse the memory of your miserable child, who will not live long to grieve you now."

"Oh, Augusta, hush! What are you saying?" whispered Jacquetta, raising her up. "Come with me—come to your room."

"Only say that, papa! dearest, kindest papa! only say that you will never curse the memory of your wretched daughter!" pleaded Augusta, sinking lower and lower at his feet.

"My dear child, I never will. God bless you! Go," he said, putting one trembling hand up before his face.

She arose, slowly and heavily, and suffered Jacquetta to lead her from the room.

And Mr. De Vere, with his face averted and hidden by his hand, sat perfectly still, his drooping head and the heaving of his strong chest alone betokening his emotion.

Disbrowe, lost in wonder, stood looking out of the window on the deepening night; and Frank, though he would have been inclined to knock any one down who would have ventured to insinuate such a thing, stood winking both eyes at once, very hard, and the trees before the window looked crooked, as if seen through tears.

Presently Jacquetta returned, and, coming over to Disbrowe, touched him lightly on the arm. He looked down in her pale, gray face—so different from the sparkling, animated countenance of the morning—and waited to hear what she had to say.

"You will pardon me, I am sure, Captain Disbrowe," she said, hurriedly, "after what you have seen and heard, if I suggest the propriety of your retiring at once. You will not find any of us, I am afraid, very entertaining companions to-night; and, besides, you must be tired after your journey."

"Most certainly," said Disbrowe, cordially. "I was about to ask permission to retire as a favor. I hope Miss Augusta will be better to-morrow. No; don't ring. I can find my room myself. Good-night."

And he was gone.

Very cheerful did his pleasant room, with its bright fire, look that evening, chill with the raw, wintry blasts of early April. The dark, oaken wainscoting sparkled and shone in the ruddy light of the fire, and the stars on the walls and ceiling were fairly blinding in their glancing brightness. But, brightest of all still, was the pictured face that smiled down on him from over the mantel; that bright, piquant, coquettish little face, so different from the dark, grave one he had seen it a moment before.

He drew an arm-chair close up to the fire, and sat down; and, with his boots elevated on the fender, a cigar between his lips, his handsome head leaning against the cushions, and his bright, bold, dark eyes fixed intently upon it, he lay and watched. Fitfully that winking little face smiled upon him from between the blue curling wreaths of scented vapor, and, as he watched it, a curious smile broke over his face, as if in answer. A curious, smiling smile, that seemed to say: "I wonder if I could make the original smile on me like that, if I were to try?" He glanced with that same inexplicable look in the full-length mirror, and the tall, graceful figure, the bold, handsome face, with its clustering locks of rich, brown hair, and dark, bright, handsome eyes, were certainly not likely to contradict the idea. There was nothing of the fop in that look, however; and the next moment the smile was gone, the cigar in the fire, and, with his hands in his pockets, he was pacing up and down the room, and whistling "Hear me, Norma."

Then he thought of this other proud, stately cousin of his, this naughty Lady Augusta, this "true De Vere," and every other feeling was merged and lost in wonder; and the Honorable Alfred Disbrowe began to cogitate whether he had not got among a lot of escaped lunatics by some

mistake or other. Then he thought of old Grizzle Howlett, and her strange power; and of this mysterious secret and hidden crime; and became shocked, and revolted, and unbelieving at the thought of crime with this proud, noble-looking girl. Then he thought of the singularly beautiful Spanish boy he had seen, the "little brigand," as he inwardly termed him, and became puzzled once more—for something about him was strangely yet unaccountably familiar. Then he thought of Captain Nick Tempest, and of his singular and undefinable resemblance to Jacquetta; and that brought his thoughts back to where they had started from. And resuming his seat and his former position, he lit another cigar, leaned back, and, for over an hour, sat there and watched that portrait without once removing his eyes.

At last he awoke to the consciousness that it was beginning to grow late, and that he was both tired and sleepy; and rising with a yawn, he bade a sort of mental good-night to his silent companion, prepared for bed, protested in confidence to himself that the said bed was like some old tomb, threw himself upon it, and in ten minutes was sound asleep.

Hours passed; the night wore on; the fire flickered and smoldered fitfully; and still he slept. All was silent as the grave through the vast mansion, when suddenly, with a strange start and a shock, and a feeling as if a strong hand was on his throat, he sprung up in bed—awake!

There was a sound in the air; the sound of music, soft, sweet, and far off. He awoke bewildered, and looked around, at a loss to know where he was. The fire sent out a sudden jet of red flame, and it fell bright and livid on the pictured face; and it seemed to him, as he looked up, that the eyes were alive, and glared fiercely and redly down upon him, with a weird, unearthly look. The sight restored memory; but still—

he was waking or dreaming?—the air was full of music yet.

He sat up and listened breathlessly. Such music as it was, in the dead silence of the lonely midnight! Soft, low and inexpressibly sweet; now dying away in a faint, wailing cry, like a voice in pain; now rising softly and sweetly as an angel voice; and anon swelling out high, grand and sublime, like the notes of a triumphal march, till the listener's heart bounded in time, and every pulse leaped as if he had been a Frenchman, listening to the Marseillaise.

Still he heard it, now high, now low, now wild and agonized; now soft, plaintive and sweet; now swelling high and grand, with one vast, thundering crash, and again dying away in a low, sobbing sound—as of a strong heart in strong agony. Oh, never was earthly music like that! Entranced, enraptured, he sat and listened, dimly wondering if the heavens had opened, and those were angel voices he heard, chanting once again the old, sublime strains: "Peace on earth, and good-will to men!"

It died away at last—died away in a long, shuddering echo—its faint burden shivering with pain; and then the silence of the grave reigned. For hours he sat listening, straining his hearing to catch the faintest sound; but nothing met the ear but the melancholy sighing of the night-wind around the old house, with a sound inexpressibly dreary.

Where had that strange music come from? Not from the inhabited part of the house—for that was to his right. And when the excitement had died away, and he could calmly reflect upon it, he felt positive that had issued from the left wing—the old, half-ruined, deserted, northern part of the building. Of all the strange and unaccountable things that had puzzled him within the last four-and-twenty hours, this seemed the strangest and most unaccountable of all.

Again a red, lambent flame shot out from the dying fire, and hovered like a glory around the pictured face on the wall, and it seemed to his excited fancy, that there was exultation in the eye, and derision in the smile, as though she held the secret and scoffed at his ignorance. Tired out at last with watching, he again lay down and dreamed, undisturbed, of music, and Jacquetta, and handsome Spanish boys, and little elfish girls, and old witches twenty feet high, until the first morning sunbeam peeped through the star-curtained oriole window, and fell lovingly and warmly on his face.

It was a merry kiss on the closed lids of the young Englishman's dark eyes.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VENDETTA.

"Then surely," said the lady's knight, "on earth must be, since never was there mortal might heard such sweet melody!"

—OLD BALLAD.

The sun was high in the heavens ere Captain Disbrowe awoke, and, springing up, he leisurely began to dress, rummaging still on the unaccountable incidents of the preceding night. But all his ruminations ended by leaving him more perplexed than ever; and the face on the wall, at which he glanced at intervals, smiled serenely, and suggested nothing to help him out of his difficulty.

"Upon my soul, I believe I have got into an enchanted castle!" he muttered, tying his cravat, critically. "The Castle of Otranto couldn't hold a candle to it, and it beats the 'Mysteries of Udolpho' all to pieces!"

How remarkably fond of music any one must be who will get out of their comfortable bed in the 'dead waste and middle of the night' to serenade the bats and owls in that old tower, or whatever they call it! Well, every one to their taste; and that reminds me that I should feel obliged to any one who would inform me whether that face is pretty or not—for, upon my word and honor, I can't decide."

So saying, the Honorable Alfred left his room; and, humming the tag-end of a tune, ran down stairs, passed through the hall, stretched out the faint outline of blue shadowy halls, dying out in the blue sky. The air was balmy with the faint odor from the pine forest, and rung and resounded with the blithe voices of numberless birds, up and hard at work for the day.

While the young guardsman stood leaning negligently against the vast stuccoed pillars that supported the massive doorway,

he heard a footstep behind him, and the next moment Frank appeared, bright and cheery.

"Hallo! Up already?" was his salutation. "Nice morning, ain't it?"

Captain Disbrowe glanced at the bright sky and brighter sun, and not being able, consistently with truth, to deny the fact, admitted that it was rather a nice morning.

"Beats your English climate slightly—don't it?" said Frank. "Rain and drizzle, and mud; and then, mud, and drizzle, and rain, by way of a change. Ugh! I wouldn't be paid to live in such a place at any price!"

"Which is England's loss, if she only knew it," said Disbrowe, lazily; "but we have a glimpse of sunshine there occasionally, my young friend—on the king's birthday, and the festival of St. George and the Dragon, and other national feasts; so it's not altogether so overwhelming and knock-down a sight to see the sun as you might suppose. Where are the rest? Every thing was so still, I thought none of you were up."

"Up?" said Frank, like an echo. "Doesn't Jack always beat the sun, and be up and doing an hour before he has the faintest idea of rousing himself for his day's labor? I guess so! And now she's off over the hills on horseback, and has most likely cleared some dozen miles before this. As for judging by the stillness, this house always goes considerably ahead of the Palace of Silence, or the Dead Sea, or any other mute and solemn old tomb, I flatter myself, in that article."

"Indeed! By the way," said Disbrowe, carelessly, "is all the building inhabited—I mean, do the family occupy the whole of it?"

"Oh, no—not near. That old north wing over there— isn't it dismal-looking?—hasn't been occupied for the last twenty years or more. You see, it was built as near like Fontenell Park as possible, but it wasn't convenient in the old style, and though it suited England well enough, it didn't pay in America. The swallows built their nests in the chimneys, and they smoked like fury, and the roof leaked in wet weather, and the windows were small and dark, and the rooms were large and gloomy, with oak wainscoting; and, altogether, it was a dismal old barn as ever was. So Uncle Rob had the southern wing built; and that, with the right half of this middle part, is all we occupy."

"Ah," said Disbrowe, thoughtfully, "and you are quite sure—"

"I'm quite sure that's Jack," cut in Frank, suddenly. "There she goes! Ain't she a tip-top rider? Look at that!—now watch her clear that fence!"

A high fence, with a sharp, spiked top, was right in the way of the rider, as she came sweeping down, mounted on a splendid black Arabian—a fence that would have made even the finished rider, Captain Disbrowe, mounted on his superb Saladin, pause; but it stopped not the course of the spirited little equestrian, who came dashing along. Backing her horse for the leap over it, she dashed in splendid style; and then, relaxing into a trot, she ambled up, and, lifting her eyes, saw the two spectators.

"Good-morning, Captain Disbrowe," she said, touching her plumed riding-hat gallantly. "Why didn't you get up and take a gallop with me over the hills this bright morning, for the benefit of your health and appetite, instead of lying lazily in bed? Oh, I forgot," she added, with a saucy glance and a light, breezy laugh, as she sprang off, "you're a true-born Englishman, and fond of creature comforts, and taking your ease. Here, William, take my horse."

"Not so fond of either, Miss Jacquetta," he said, piqued at her look and tone, but that he would gladly have given both up for a ride with his charming little cousin, if I had known it in time."

"Well, mind for the future; for I don't intend to take compliments, or any small coins of that sort, in return for a want of gallantry. I hope you're a pretty good rider, Cousin Alfred, and won't mind risking your neck now and then over the mountains—or else it will never do for you to ride with me."

"Who would not risk his neck, my fairy sprite, for the sake of attending you? Who could wish for a fairer death than meeting it in the service of so bewitching a mountain queen? Ah! wouldn't I risk my neck joyfully, if I thought it would draw one tear from you," said Disbrowe, in a mock-heroic strain.

"Upon my word, then, I don't think it would," said Jacquetta, composedly. "I'm not given to crying much myself, as a general thing, and when I do, it's only for sensible people; and I consider that any one who would risk his neck joyfully just to make one drop a tear, would be, to draw it mild, an unmitigated donkey! Now, there!"

She sprang up beside him as she spoke; and, snatching off her hat, began swinging it by the strings. Disbrowe met her bright, saucy, defiant glance, and at last decided that she was pretty. Yes, Jacquetta De Vere was, undeniably, pretty, and looked her very best at that moment. The small, straight, little figure was set off to perfection by the close-fitting, dark-blue riding-habit; the gray eyes were flashing and sparkling like twin stars; the short, red, silky curls danced and glittered in spiral rings around the white, polished, boyish forehead; the cheeks were like spring roses, and the mirthful glance and mocking smile were the living reality of the picture. Breezy and bright she stood there, every saucy, piquant feature of her piquant little face sparkling with youth, life, beauty and an exultant sense of freedom, reminding him of some half-tamed thing—some shy, wild, fierce young eagle, dangerous to touch too closely; the least dignified De Vere he had ever seen, perhaps; but certainly the most bewitching. Not a trace of last night's grave trouble remained; and Disbrowe scarcely knew whether the whole thing was not part of a dream.

"By the way," said Jacquetta, slapping her gaiter with her riding-whip, and giving him a merry glance. "I made a conquest this morning."

"Well, that is nothing wonderful—is it?" said Disbrowe, "for you, who have only to see to conquer?"

"Ah, to be sure! I never thought of that. See what it is to have a long head. But this was something unusual—something to be proud of. Oh! gracious! wasn't he a darling?"

"What was it?" said Disbrowe. "A grizzly bear, or a catamount, or a man-monkey? I don't see what else you could very well meet in these savage regions."

"No, sir," said Jacquetta, indignantly. "It was the most splendid-looking little foreigner—oh, my! Oh, such eyes, such features, such a superb little form, such dainty hands and feet, such hair!"—and Jacquetta shook her own curly head till its red ringlets glanced again—"and such a dress! Good gracious! And then the way he doffed his plumed cap and made me such a courtly bow, was a sight to see, not to hear of. Oh, the little darling!" said Jacquetta, going off into a small rapture.

"Why, it must have been the little brigandish foreigner I met at the Mermaid Inn," said Disbrowe. "Where did you see him?"

"Taking a stroll over the hills, and I have not the faintest symptom of a heart left ever since," said Jacquetta.

"How I wish I were him!" said Disbrowe, sighing.

"Well, you're not him, you see! Oh! I forgot to ask you how did you rest last night—pretty hostess, ain't it?"

"Very," said Disbrowe, emphatically, and looking unutterable things; but Jacquetta only laughed; and I rested very well, thank you; but there was rather a singular thing happened about midnight."

"Indeed! what was it?" said Jacquetta, with a start, and fixing her bright eyes full upon him.

"A very pleasant incident, but rather unaccountable—the sound of music, the strangest, sweetest, wildest strains I ever heard, and seemingly issuing from yonder deserted part of the building. What! good heavens! have I frightened you, my dear cousin? You are fainting!"

"No, I am not; it is nothing," she gasped; but, as if by magic, the light had been stricken from her eye, the rose from her cheek, the brightness from her face, and a look, so white, so haggard, so shuddering, came over her, that faint and sick she grasped the pillar for support, and pressed her hand hard on her heart, whose tumultuous throbbing could almost be heard.

So appalling, so terrifying, so instantaneous was the change, that Disbrowe was thunderstruck. Then, as she still stood holding on to the pillar, deathly white, and shivering through all her frame, he caught her in his arms, fearing she would faint and fall.

The action seemed to galvanize her into spasmodic life. With a wild, jarring cry, that awoke the echoes, she sprang from his retaining arms, and held out her own blindly, as if to keep him off.

"Off, off!" she cried, passionately. "Touch me not!"

"Why, Jack! Good gracious, Jack! what set you off in this gale?" said Frank, in astonishment, as he returned after a moment's absence.

"Nothing! Hush!" She grasped Disbrowe's arm with a convulsive pressure, and made a motion for him not to speak. At that instant he saw her face white and terrified, the next, as she turned to Frank, it was, though pale, perfectly calm and composed. "I wish you would go to the stable, Frank, and see that William attends properly to Lightning. He has had a hard ride this morning, and needs looking after. That's a good boy."

Frank darted off, and Jacquetta's face was averted for a moment, as she gazed after him. When she turned it again to Disbrowe, it was, though slightly pale, cool and composed as ever; and as she met his astonished glance, she laughed in his face.

"I rather think the case is reversed, and I have frightened you, my good cousin. Why, Captain Disbrowe, I would not have Frank hear the story of that ghostly music for any earthly consideration. It would be all over the country in a jiffy, that the house is haunted. Are you quite sure you were not dreaming, cousin Alf?"

"Quite," said Disbrowe, brusquely.

"Ah! Well, it may have been an Aeolian harp, or something—most likely it was. And then the wind blew pretty hard last night. Or it may have been cats—our Thomas is musically given, and entertains a select party of friends every night in the corridors of the north wing. Are you sure it was not the cats, cousin?" said Jacquetta, cutting the air with her whip, and again laughing.

"Perfectly sure, Miss Jacquetta. Neither my hearing nor my eyesight deceive me often," he replied, pointedly.

"Oh! don't they? You are wider awake, then, than the generality of your countrymen. Perhaps there are ghosts there, then, and you heard the music of the Dance of Death. Ugh! it's enough to give one the horrors to think of it! This comes of building houses in the old English style, instead of any decent Christian fashion. I always heard that ghosts and rats were particularly fond of old houses; but I never knew of my own knowledge before. It's lucky you told me, instead of any weak-minded person with a belief in the supernatural. Be sure you don't mention it to any one else—above all, to Uncle or Frank!"

The last words were accompanied by a brief, bright flash of her eye, that said, as plain as words: "If you do tell, it will be well for you." Captain Disbrowe understood it, and replied by a slight bow and sligher smile; and then said, to turn the conversation, which annoyed him somehow, though he could scarcely tell why.

"How is Miss Augusta this morning?"

"Better, I believe. I am going to see her now; and au revoir till breakfast-time." And humming a Venetian barcarole, and still swinging her jaunty riding-hat by the strings, she tripped lightly away.

Disbrowe stood and watched the light, small, fairy figure until it disappeared, more thoroughly puzzled than he had ever been before in his life.

"Strange, inexplicable girl!" he mused; "who can understand her? She is an enigma, a riddle, a puzzle, a Gordian knot of tangles and inconsistencies. I wonder if it would be worth the time and trouble unravelling said knot, or if it would be altogether safe?"

The same curious smile that had dawned on his face the night before, while watching her picture, broke over it again, and once more he began whistling the air of "Hear me, Norma," as on that occasion, with the look of one who would give himself a reminder.

To the surprise of Disbrowe, Lady Augusta appeared at breakfast; and save that her face was cold and lifeless as marble, and her eyes had a dead, fixed, settled look of hopeless despair, no trace remained of the preceding evening's terrible agitation. Mr. De Vere looked pale, and grave, and troubled; but Jacquetta appeared, though a little subdued, in excellent spirits, and kept up an unflagging flow of words.

After breakfast, accompanied by Mr. De Vere, he went over the grounds, admired

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Our Arm-Chair.

The Requisites of Authorship.—Of course we are always sorry to learn that certain persons are poor and wish that they could write acceptably for the press; but we can not accept matter in deference to an author's needs. We would soon swamp our paper if any other course was pursued than to regard every thing submitted solely by the criterion of merit.

The motive which impels the mother, hard pressed by the sore needs of her family, to write for publication, is a noble one; but, as readers never can or will forgive the use of inferior matter, the editor really has no option, but must reject what his literary judgment does not endorse.

Almost every day we have manuscript offered which we are urged to accept on the plea of the writer's needs. Sometimes this manuscript has been wrought with great labor, and amid almost inconceivable discouragements, making the story of its composition a pitiful one, and greatly adding to the editor's distress at its necessary rejection.

Persons who rarely write for the press, and only under the inspiration of their wants, rarely write well. Authorship demands certain faculties as requisites for success which education can not supply. Merely to be able to write correctly is only an adjunct, or the conveyance which bears your wares to a market. A large class of would-be writers make the mistake of thinking the outward form of expression is the substance. It is no more the substance than a house is the dwellers therein.

It is only those who have something new and original to say who can succeed with the press. They who see beneath the crust of outward forms—who study nature with keen and eager eyes—who read the human heart and can probe human feeling—who see apposite and antithesis and can present them in a way to impress—such a person alone is qualified for the career of journalism and authorship.

The Fat Contributor.—As a humorous lecturer, our friend Griswold is making a fine reputation, as his usually large audiences, and the press notices attest. From the *Traveller*, Minneapolis, we clip the following as a "specimen brick" of the temple of fame that he is building:

THE FAT CONTRIBUTOR.—"The lecture last evening by this distinguished writer, editor and proved the greatest success of the season. The hall was comfortably filled by one of the happiest audiences that we have ever seen assembled. To describe the lecture is simply impossible. It abounded in wit, fun, personal oddities and original conceits, with occasional passages of deep pathos. Knowing the lecturer's reputation, the audience anticipated much, but all received more than they expected. In fact, they were both delighted and astonished—delighted with the singular melody of humor, quaintness and oddity, and astonished at the originality and frequent suddenness of the speaker's brilliant flashes of wit. It operated on the nerves of the hearer as suddenly as the stepping into a post-hole while indulging in a dreamy reverie amid exotic shrubs and flowers. The odd conceits and warm, genial scintillations of fun came so sudden and unexpected that the house was invariably carried by storm. Those of his hearers who were naturally humorous laughed because it was meat and drink to them. The remainder laughed because they couldn't help it. The world has produced a good many poets, artists and orators, but it never produced but one 'Fat Contributor.'"

That's a fact! The world has produced but one 'Fat Contributor,' and he writes his best things for the SATURDAY JOURNAL. Enough said!

Book Agents.—A friend in the book trade complains of the interference with his business by agents introducing "subscription books," and asks us to "help abate the nuisance."

We can not regard the matter as does our friend. Not only do we not think the canvassing business a nuisance but regard it as a perfectly proper and useful mode of disposing of stock—as much so, as canvassing for subscriptions to a magazine or weekly paper, in advance of their issue; and we must credit the opposition of the "regular" trader to mere chagrin at an opposition which he is powerless to suppress.

Judged by all the laws of trade, and by the principles which govern in the business world, it must be assumed as a truism that, so long as it is a mere question of demand and supply, the book business is just as properly in the hands of agents as in the regular trade.

Indeed, the canvassing business is, in some respects, an admirable system. Take such a work as Henry Ward Beecher's "Life of Christ"—a book eminently proper in homes; yet, how comparatively few homes would have the volume if only the regular dealer supplied it.

The ubiquitous canvasser carries it to every fireside, where it can be examined at pleasure, and thus the book will be, in a comparatively short time, in the hands of those for whom it was more especially prepared.

The world of readers is large enough for all. For canvassers there is a special audience; for the regular trade there is a constituency so great that it will be a marvel when good books cease to sell.

RIDICULE.

There's nothing more mortifying or hurtful to the feelings than ridicule. How cowardly a person is, in indulging in it! If a person is deaf, you ought not to make the motions of talking—but keep silent all the while—just for the amusement of having him strain his ears, imagining you were really conversing with him.

It is a hard enough infliction to bear—this lack of hearing—and should not be made sport of by others. Afflictions of this, or any other nature, should be pitied, and not ridiculed. Remember, it is the Lord's will whereby afflictions come, and we must never mock what seemeth right to Him.

I knew a dear old lady once—would we had more like her—who had been weeks planning a visit to her married son, and at last set out. So great was her anticipated pleasure of seeing him, that she paid no attention to the beautiful scenery round about. Arrived at her son's residence, she was met at the door by him. Before she had a chance to alight, he said, "What on earth possessed you to come in that old team?" That spoiled all the enjoyment of her visit. Perhaps her son meant not to offend, but the words cut deep into her heart for that.

You wouldn't want to go to see a relative, and because your clothes were not of the newest cut, have her say, "Why I are those the best clothes you have?" would you? And yet, I've known a young man stay away from a person's house for three months because the remark was made to him, and I can't say I blame him much, either, for I'd do the same thing, if I had the same cause.

If one does happen to have a longer nose than is usually given to the lot of man, don't be always pulling at it—I mean, do not be forever making fun of it, because it is a person's misfortune, not his fault; and if another one chances to have red hair, it's not very polite to keep talking, in his presence, of fiery volcanoes.

Don't ridicule the drunkard's gait, his senseless gabble, or his silly commensurate; better do more about his reformation, and seek to reclaim him.

Don't ridicule timid people; their natures are such that things which cause us no alarm, frighten them greatly. Some persons can not endure the sight of a spider or a bug of any kind, while others look upon a mouse with the same terror that we would on an uncaged lion. But, to ridicule them for so doing is neither kindly nor right, and makes neither of the parties any happier or better.

And don't make fun of people's letters. We ought to bear in mind that it requires a little art to compose a good letter. I never criticize their epistles. I forget the bad spelling, in the good thoughts of the writer. If the grammar is not according to the text-books, it's not my affair. If a person does use a small "i," in place of a capital one, I think it shows what an humble opinion he has of himself, and it's better than to have letters filled with egotistical bombast.

We haven't any right to ridicule the little failings of our old folks. If it's not for us to say they shan't take it, it is?

I think—and perhaps you do—that we are very willing to ridicule others, but don't find it to fit so very well on ourselves. Then why wish others to suffer what would give us pain? But, as Grandma Lawless says, "If all our faults were corrected, we'd have nothing to write about, and our tongues would talk of nothing but good."

Let's laugh at me for trying to make people better, when, she says, I have oceans of faults of my own; but doctors rarely take their own medicines.

EVIE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

Captain John Smith.

CAPTAIN JOHN (famously called Jack) SMITH was originally born, much against his will, in England, of religious but pious parents. We read that, from a babe, he was a good boy, and that he was so good that he ran away from home as all great men do at that age, and traveled through Europe, meeting with many strange adventures, until he got out of stamps and was obliged to enlist in the Transylvanian army, where he went by the name of Captain Jinks, of the horse maroons (who even to this day look so brave upon the stage). He finally flung his liberty away in battle with the Turk, and was taken to one of Harper's Bazaars in Constantinople, where he was sold as a slave. [For descriptions of his slave life see "Uncle Tom's Cabin."] After many vicissitudes he escaped, got back to England, and published a book of his travels under the title of "Munchausen Abroad," or something of that sort, in which the truth is somewhat eclipsed by the marvelous.

He left England, with a number of people, to make a settlement in Virginia, where

they could enjoy freedom of conscience, wild beasts, Indians, and tobacco. The settlement established, Smith went on a voyage of discovery up an inland river, where his men were shot by the Indians and he taken prisoner by Powhattan (so called because he wore a plug hat on his frosty pow), who took him into his wigwam—a place where they hang up wigs—and there decided that he should pass in his checks. Smith was desirous of a delay in the proceedings; and to compass his ends, he pulled out a pocket compass and gave them a familiar lecture on seamanship. He explained that the compass guided a very large ship as a very small wife will guide a very large man. He said: "When the hand points there, you must let go the taffrail, unreef the bulkhead, haul in the lar-board, let go the star-board, and unfurl the capstan."

"When the hand points there, you heave the lead or the leader if you like, run the helm to the mast-head, put the hens in the cock-pit or hatchway, let go the gunwale, and haul in the wind. If it points there, wind up the solid dampness; 'how the canvas hauls, take the knots out of the ship's course, weigh your anchor with a pair of steelyards, shuffle the deck, run before or behind the wind as you please, put some new keel on the vessel, get a bottle and round to."

Thus did the gallant captain try to beguile the old king, smiling at the ladies of the court, and chucking the babies under the chin in the meantime. He explained how this earth was a flat ball, with the sea level around it to the depth, in some places, of five miles of solid dampness; "how the moon, in the circumstantial attraction of interlunar repulsion capillary concentrated through the misanthropy of the theoretical levitation synthetically etheralized in irredeemable and cerulean precariousness individualizes the universal barometrical petroleum in mythological antipathy"—or, to get at my meaning—causes the tides. He also told them when he was at home he was King of the Cannibal Isles.

The king, seeing that Smith was a learned man, postponed the little affair until he could get at the meaning of the captain's words, keeping him bound meanwhile to keep the peace while the king hung up his costume—his hat—on a nail, took a whisky-punch off the same piece the last one was taken from, and, putting on his spectacles and looking over the rims, went to reading Napoleon's History of Caesar, renewing the whisky-punch every time he came to a period (which he had been taught were placed there for that purpose), while Smith felt that the ties that bound him to the Indians were rather stronger than his heart could desire.

He was tied to a tree close by the king's magnificent marble palace, which was a bark tent, and through an oriel window, which was merely a hole in the tent, he frequently caught sight of the lovely princess, Pocahontas—or Dirt-on-your-neck—who was employed, not at the piano pounding out harmony, but pounding hominy and glancing slyly at him through her hair, which hadn't been combed with a pitchfork for a week. Her Japanese calico dress was cut bias; her gingham sun-bonnet evinced royal simplicity and dirt, as the annual washerwoman had been detained on account of sickness. Her panniers were of the latest bulge, and her Grecian bend was faultless. The captain thought at first she wore shoes, but soon discovered it was the high-mud mark of the last puddle she stepped in. This completed her toilet.

The gallant captain was charmed; never before had such loveliness met his gaze; and then, that voice as she sung *Vikings and Dials!*

He sought to gain her favor. He was an artist; he sat to work and whittled out a jumping Jack to be pulled with a string. He sent it to her. She was charmed; he was delighted. She evinced her love by leaping sixteen feet in air and whirling over as she came down. He evinced his by scratching his back against the tree.

Was there ever a happier couple in their first transports of love? I hear you say "no!" You're right.

From that hour she fed him with her own hands—dipping up his soup with them and putting it into his mouth. Her hands were not dirty (at least not after she had them in the soup awhile) and in this beguiling manner several days passed.

At last, the king made his appearance and said, "Captain, it was my intention to kill you several days ago, but I had quite forgotten your case. I humbly beg your pardon for my negligence, but we shall proceed with the ceremony forthwith."

Smith pleaded for his life in English, prayed in Dutch, expostulated in French, and begged in Turkey, but the king was inexorable. They laid his head upon a huge stone, without even putting a pillow under it, and without boiling the stone to make it soft. The king said that as the head was soft it wouldn't hurt the stone.

The captain urged, if they were going to knock his brains out, to have it done with a coat sleeve stuffed with wool or feathers.

The king answered that his brains he must have, as he needed them.

Two stalwart warriors raised their clubs over his head, first splitting on their hands, (you have seen the pictures). Frank Leslie had an artist there; he sketched the scene. They held their clubs in that position until he sketched them. He was long at it; so they growled and sat down until the drawing was completed. Then, once more, the deadly clubs were poised aloft—descended with deadly force to within four inches of the doomed skull, which would have cracked like a peanut. The captain had closed his eyes for the blow; Pocahontas threw her head upon his; he, thinking it was the clubs, yelled, "I'm Schmit, I'm smitten!" She folded one arm around his head and nearly strangled him, crying—"You shan't hurt a head of his hair, nor mash those nose. Let him alone, if you know what's good for you, or I'll get up and thrash you all!" Smith, in the meanwhile, begging for fresh air.

The king, starting up off the fellow he'd been sitting on, said, "Well, this seems pretty lofty for high; why is this thus? Why is this for what? from whence? for whether? whither? where? for why? whysoever is this for wherefore? I demand, why is this for which? How can this be thuswise?"

Let us draw a veil. Captain Smith was saved, but he is too weak from terror to be brought before the public in the continuation of this narrative. We will let him have time to recover. Fold the JOURNAL up tenderly, so as not to make a noise and disturb him. He sleeps. Let this story make you have a better feeling for the Smiths.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage. No MSS. preserved for future orders. Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return. A class MS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked Book M., and be sealed in wrapper with open end, in order to pass the mails at "book rate." No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperially covered or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy," third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we choose the shorter. Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its folio or page number. A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use. All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention. Correspondents must look to this column for all information regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Will use "Border Law;" "Woman's Fight with Panther;" "Weary;" "Ladies vs. Women;" "A Moving Essay;" "Memories of Me;" "The Belle's Revenge;" "How She Made Her Fortune;" "Disowned;" "How They Pooled Uncle Billy."

Can make no use of "Doomed Sentinels;" "Retribution;" "Reconciliation;" "Ebenzer Ferguson;" "Alice Langdon's Secret;" "The Fine Harren Tragedy;" "A Lumberman's Story;" "The Grand Duke;" "Mrs. Jones' Revenge;" "True Wisdom;" "Right or Wrong;" "Right or Wrong;" "Burton's All;" "Not True."

Poems, "Chicago," by E. J., and "Maple Trees," by L. C. G., and "Autumn's Welcome," all are just a little old—unavailable.

To "Sword and Pen" we must say no. It is forced in expression and somewhat prosy.

Poets must be patient. When we accept a poem it is no promise to use it at once. Each accepted offering will find its way into our columns sometime.

PAR. M. "Red Arrow, the Wolf Demon," was published too recently by us to be republished. In giving the proportion, what we do, of short stories and serials, we please the great majority of readers. To give all serials would displease many.

MISS ELLA G. We can not use the MS. remitted. Your ideas of prices are what is exaggerated. We do not make any "engagement," but read what is sent in and accept or reject as we must.

CLARA R. You are too young to "go out" in society. No girl of fifteen should think of company and the beaux. When she thinks of them good-by to all progress in study.

Z. G. S. Moore's Rural New Yorker—the famous paper par excellence.

EDNA D. P. The Life of Christ, by Beecher, is not at all controversial. It is purely a home book; accepts the authenticity of the four gospels and is "orthodox" in all senses. It is a good book but far from being a great one.

D. S. O. Old Grizzly Adams' great Bear Show exhibited in the Eastern States in the year 1859. It comprised some sixteen or seventeen bears including four monster specimens, and among them, three black bears, one cinnamon bear, four brown bears, etc., etc. Old Sampson weighed over two thousand pounds. The saddle and bridle used by Old Adams on Sampson were exhibited. Sampson perished in the fire which consumed Barnum's Museum, New York city, in 1860. The other bears were sold to various parties.

OLIVER. Mr. Albert W. Aiken does not republish his serials in book form. They can only be had in the columns of this paper, for which he writes exclusively. His "Mad Man of the Plains" commences soon.

A DUNCE. Thank you for your contributions to the Omnibus. All such favors are acceptable. Original jokes, incidents, etc., are, always welcome, from any source.

J. F. M. asks us by what authority a certain popular paper reprints Wilkie Collins' "Dead Secret," disguised under the title of "The Fatal Mystery," and dropping the author's name? The authority of the American Congress. The same correspondent asks who is the author of "Beautiful Snow." Not knowing can't say. Six persons, we believe, claim the production as their own. Dr. Grunsey, of Harper's Weekly, believes that he published the "Original Jacobs and Beddle's" old "Monthly" thought it had that honor.

WOLF DEMON wants to know what will improve his looks. Pretty he is as pretty does. Is a homey old English proverb, and is applicable to the person who lives up to the Golden Rule in the Model Man. Your good-looking men are usually disagreeably conceited, and they rarely amount to much in the world's great bazaar of battle, in which only true men win.

CONSTANT READER. To remove the marks of India ink from clothing, oxalic acid is used when the cloth is white, but if the garment is colored, it can not be used, as the acid would take out the color as well as the ink. The preparation is to dissolve the acid in water, and rub the spots with it. There is nothing, we believe, that will take India ink from the skin, when it is picked in, as is frequently seen, upon the arms of sea-faring men.

STERN-AXON TON. The name of a species of a schooner are called the fore and main mast, and these can be "hoisted" or taken down when necessary. The head sails of a schooner are the main jib and jib.

ARTIST. Constant Myer is the artist who painted "Household Words." "Dead in the Desert" is from the brush of Bispham, the animal painter.

THOMAS. The cost of the STAR JOURNAL is six cents per copy, or for the first seventy-six numbers, \$4.21.

SAILOR. A book written some time since entitled, "Navigation by Steam and Sail," will give you a great deal of information regarding the names of different parts of ships.

J. G. W. You had better cease your experiments to "make your hair curl." Nature made your hair straight; so let it remain so, and you will have no cause to regret your attempts at making "early locks."

G. M. The engagement-ring is worn only by the lady, and the gift of the engagement-ring is engaged. The fore-finger of the left hand is the one used for the engagement-ring, and the third finger of the same hand for the wedding-ring; in some parts of the world the third finger is used for both rings.

MARY SCOTT asks: "How should one go about taking a plaster cast of a person's face?" The process is very simple. Place the person in a reclining position; close the eyes; oil, or soap the face well, insert quills into the nostrils; apply the liquid plaster, and allow it to remain several minutes. Remove this, which forms the mold, from which an exact cast may be taken. For fuller information, see "Plaster Casts," page 131, of the Manufacturer and Builder for June, 1871.

ROBERT RIDLEY requests information regarding the time a gentleman should give a lady to decide upon her acceptance or refusal, and if the former, how long, before she should be asked to answer we may say that the fair sex will not be governed by rules, at all, in matters matrimonial, and can not be "timed" like a race-horse or a race-horse, and a distant day for her marriage it is doubtless with good cause; it being easier for a woman to make up her mind to marry than to make up her trousers.

A YOUNG CLEVERMAN asks: "Is it proper when saying 'Dearly beloved Brethren,' to pronounce the beloved in three syllables? When beloved is placed before the noun, as in this instance, pronounce it in three syllables; when placed after, in two syllables, as, 'He was much beloved by us all.'"

Mrs. J. T. Monroe asks: "Is it true that in any history of Henry VIII. it is asserted that he had instituted secret proceedings tending to the removal of Jane Seymour, in case her child should prove a girl? No! although he has been rightly termed the 'wife exterminator,' the burly monarch was as much attached to Jane, as it was in his fickle nature to be."

D. W. TAYLOR writes: "It is should be on the street with a young lady, and should choose to meet a gentleman friend of mine, whom I had not seen for some time, and with whom she is not acquainted, would it be proper for her to introduce them there?" It is better to avoid introductions on the street, for they are generally awkward. But, if the parties are particular friends of yours, and you feel assured they will prove a physical injury to her, with each other, an introduction might be given.

F. W. FORD. It is not respectful toward those who are boarding in the same house with you for you to go down to dinner, and enter the parlors in your dressing-gown and slippers. If you were in your own house, the matter would be very different.

MISS ALEXIS. It is, doubtless, true that the American ladies, as a class, have very nice and pretty feet, particularly the Southerners; but the Cuban, Mexican and Spanish ladies have feet still smaller. The ladies of this age are doing much to ruin the symmetry of their feet by wearing high heels almost directly beneath the instep. It spoils the walk of a graceful woman, if persisted in; and, besides, will prove a physical injury to her.

ESTD. Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS.

BY IDALLA.

In the sweet-scented, dew-laden garden,
Lingering 'mid rosy bowers,
A moment I'll stoop to gather for thee
A cluster of modest flowers.

For they'll softly whisper in language sweet
What I dare not say to thee;
What my trembling lips would never reveal
They'll speak for my heart and me.

I'll gather geraniums' dark-green leaves,
And violets, deepest blue;
A cluster of purple heliotrope,
And a rosebud bathed in dew.

Geranium leaves, rose-scented, mean
"Preference." Who prefer I?
Heliotrope is for "Constancy,"
True to my love till I die!

The modest violet tremblingly vows
"Devotion"—vows it for me?
The nose-bud, red-tinted, ah! I here confessed
Is my love—my love for thee!

Laura's Thanksgiving.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

The deep-gold sunshine of the November afternoon cast long, slanting shadows across the glittering snow, and turned to massive bronze the gnarled old trees in the front yard, and the brown farm-house of Amos Gray.

One stray beam dropped through the white curtains of Laura's little chamber up-stairs, and fell across the fleecy folds of spotless muslin, among which Laura's neat fingers were fastening dainty loops of blue ribbon.

For to-morrow was Thanksgiving Day, and upon this very night—Thanksgiving Eve—there was to be a grand ball at the town hall, and everybody was going.

Rufus Hatch gave Laura an invitation nearly a month ago. It was very pleasant to go to a ball, and very much pleasanter to go with Rufus Hatch anywhere; so that is why Laura's blue eyes were so bright, and the pink spots glowing so softly on her round young cheek, as she knelt beside her bed, and busied her deft fingers with the knots of pretty ribbon.

"There!" she breathed, reflecting at last, and stepping back to note the effect of her work; "that is pretty enough for anybody. I wonder if Rufus will like it?" These last words were whispered very softly, as Laura tripped down-stairs, meeting her good father in the lower hall. His face was very grave, and in his hand he held a large, yellow envelope, on which, at a glance, Laura saw the stamp of the telegraph office.

"Father, what is the matter?" she asked, quickly. "Isn't Tom coming?" Tom was Laura's brother, in business in a neighboring city, and expected home to spend Thanksgiving Day.

"Tom may never come," answered Farmer Gray. "He fell, getting on the cars yesterday, and was injured, but the dispatch does not say how badly."

"Oh, poor Tom! I am so sorry!" said Laura, with tears in her eyes, and trembling tones.

"The dispatch says I had better come over right away," said Mr. Gray. "I am going right back to town to catch the five-thirty train. Laura—"

"Well, father?"

"I'm sorry, but I'm afraid you will have to give up your ball to-night. I don't like to have mother left alone so late, and as I shall be gone—"

"Oh, father, never mind the ball!" interrupted Laura. "You go to poor Tom, and I'll stay with mother."

"That's my good girl," said Farmer Gray, with an approving pat on her brown head. "I'm sorry for your disappointment."

"I could not enjoy it, if I went, with poor Tom hurt, and mother all alone, so far from any neighbors. I am quite willing to stay at home," said Laura, stifling a sigh as she thought somebody else would be disappointed, and that was Rufus Hatch.

Farmer Gray took a hasty cup of coffee before starting on his journey, and then rode over to town as quick as he could, to catch the train.

"Now, mother," said Laura, after they watched him out of sight, "I'll do up the supper-work, and you sit down and rest. This news about Tom has worried you so, you will be ready for one of your headaches. I'll get all through before Rufus comes."

So Laura flew quickly around till the great kitchen was tidy and quiet again. Then she trimmed the parlor fire and went up to her own room.

Upon the bed lay all the dainty white garments she had laid there in readiness to put on, but now she put them every one back in their places, with a little sigh. Then she parted the curtains, and looked out into the moonlight night.

Over the hill she could see the lights of the village, and mark the town hall, where the gay company were already assembling, and she could not help giving another little sigh of regret for the pleasure she could not share.

Presently she saw a black object coming over the hill, far up the snowy road. Nearer and faster it came, and she recognized Rufus Hatch's swift pony and light cutter, coming over to take her to the ball.

She went down to the parlor, brightened the fire and the lamp, and was ready to open the door when Rufus knocked.

He was a tall, fine-looking fellow, this Rufus, standing a head and shoulders above Laura's little figure, and it is no wonder she smiled as she looked up into his frank face.

"Why, Laura, not dressed yet?" he asked. "No, Rufus. I am sorry, but I can not go to-night."

"Can not go! Oh, I hope you can! I shall be so disappointed."

"I can't, indeed, Rufus."

And then Laura told him of Tom's accident, and why she must remain at home. He received her explanation with a grave face, but when she ended, saying she hoped he was not offended, he gave her a bright smile, saying:

"No, Laura, you should know me better than that." And Mr. Rufus began to lay off his overcoat.

"But, are you not going to the ball?" asked Laura.

"Not without you," said Rufus, with a smile which brought the blushes to Laura's cheek.

"I don't want you deprived of your evening's enjoyment because I must be," said Laura.

"Neither am I!" returned Rufus, coming to her side as she stood by the mantel-piece before the cheerful fire. "I expected my

enjoyment, Laura, in your society, and since you can not go to the ball, why, I shall stay here with you; that is, if you will let me," he added, with another smile.

"I don't think I shall object," laughed Laura. "But, Rufus, everybody will miss you at the ball."

"I had rather be missed by every one else than by you, Laura. Do you miss me when I am absent?"

"Yes," answered Laura, quietly.

Rufus let his hand fall on her shoulder, as he stood beside her.

"Laura," said he, softly, "do you know what I am going to ask you?"

"No; how should I, Rufus?"

"Perhaps because what is in my mind should influence yours," he said, lightly.

"Laura, dear," and his tone grew very earnest, "so good a daughter as you can not fail to make a good wife. I have loved you for a long time, and I think you know I want you to marry me. Will you, dear?"

Laura drooped her face very low, but, as she did not answer, Rufus softly went on:

"I don't deserve you, dear, for I am not half good enough for you, but I love you tenderly, and if you will give yourself to me, I will try to make you happy. Tell me, Laura, will you?"

And Laura put her little hand into the broad palm Rufus held out, and gently whispered, "Yes, Rufus," and then Rufus put out his arms and gathered the little form close to his breast, and—well, reader, isn't that about as far as we have any business to go?

An hour or so later Laura said:

"Rufus, do you know it is just one year to-night—Thanksgiving Eve—since I first met you?"

"Yes, I know that, Laura; and I know something else, too."

"Well, what is it?"

"I know, my dearest, that before another Thanksgiving Day comes, you will be my own beloved little wife. Laura, to-morrow we shall feel that we have something to be thankful for, shan't we?"

"I know I shall, for I love you!" shyly whispered Laura.

And she loves Rufus yet, though for four Thanksgiving Days she has been his wife. And Tom wasn't killed, if he did get hurt, for he lives in a little cottage across the way from Rufus and Laura, and his wife was Rufus' sister.

Adria, the Adopted: OR, The Mystery of Ellesford Grange. AN AMERICAN ROMANCE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "BLANDED," "SEA HARVEST," "NIM-
PHIA'S BRAVERY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

CROSS-LOT Stile was a place scrupulously avoided by the simple country folk. Between it and the highway lay some barren, clayey fields, and a deserted old graveyard, which, but for a few half-concealed mossy stones had lost all trace to denote the character of the place. Beyond, a stretch of marsh-land, bridged by a ruinous old causeway, possibly laid and used by those denizens of the Silent City, now faded from the memory of their kind, ere their work had fallen into complete decay.

Nelly Kent sped through the gathering darkness across the open, miry fields, struck by a chill which was not quite terror, upheld by something which was hardly hope.

Letting herself with difficulty in through the narrow gate, now rusted from its hinges and upheld in its place by a growth of rank shrubs, she groped her way cautiously across the yard where the shadows lay thickest. Something stirred in the coarse grass at her feet, and whirled away with an unearthly scream. It was only a night-bird frightened from its cover, but it startled her so that she caught her breath and sat down on a fallen slab to recover from a fit of violent trembling.

"What have such as I to do with fear," she muttered, half-audibly, rising up again. "Nothing to gain and nothing to lose. Life has no charms and death no terrors. Let come what will it can matter naught to me."

For how long should she vaunt the idle boast!

There was another stir in the grass near her, but she was not frightened now. She walked more steadily across the darker space until she reached the Stile.

She strained her eyes through the shadow but could see no one. She listened, the silence remained unbroken. A movement caught her eye. It was only a shadow swaying in the breeze. She sighed, turning to depart, then paused again a moment ere she should put an end to the chance which had brought her there.

There was no stir, no sound, but she was caught suddenly from behind in the grip of strong arms. Her large cloak was thrown as a muffle over her face. She was lifted and borne away, almost without a struggle, so unexpected was the attack.

She tried to scream but her voice was smothered in the close covering. She endeavored to free herself, but she was weak yet from her over-excitement of the morning, and she found herself pinioned immovably in the close grasp. With the effort she fainted dead away in the arms of her captor. Bearing her unconscious weight he strode straight on over the craggy old causeway, where now and then missing ties and rotten string-pieces plunged him ankle-deep into tenebrous mire.

On the other side was a rocky tract, and beyond a brawling little river, which in times of drought was scarcely more than a string of shallow pools connected by a thread of running water. But in stormy seasons, or in the spring when the snow melting contributed to its contents, it swelled into stormy, active passion, sweeping every obstacle which came in its way before it with irresistible force.

On the bank of this stood a mill, shattered now and long deserted. The builder, a half-crazed enthusiast, had selected the site against the urgent advice of those knowing the locality. But he soon had occasion to repent his obstinacy.

The summer drought left him without sufficient power to turn the great wheel, and the autumn storms coming with unusual severity, the river broke bounds, and flooding the country about, rose well up in the second story of the mill, tearing the machinery from its place, and leaving the building wrecked and useless.

The land to which it belonged had once

been an independent portion, which stretched in a long, narrow strip back of the Ellesford domain, but some years before had been annexed to the Templeton property.

It was toward the ruinous old mill that the man made his way.

When Nelly awoke to consciousness again she found herself in impenetrable darkness. She was lying on a rude straw pallet, and stretching out her hand it came in contact with a partition of rough boards. She endeavored to rise but her head was confused and dizzy, so she sunk back, awaiting in a half-torpid state the coming of light.

She could hear the murmur of running water, and the sound lulled her into a doze by-and-by. When she awoke again it was broad day, and the bright sunlight streamed in through cracks and chinks high up in the wall of her prison.

A queer little room it seemed to her, with no windows and a single narrow door which seemed to have been cut through the solid plank. It was, in fact, one of the great

garbans in which the grain had been stored, and was ceiled over with moveable, rough boards, but through the wide interstices she could catch a glimpse of the shattered roof and of the blue sky far beyond.

She wondered vaguely how she had come there and for what purpose. Then the removal of bolts fully aroused her. She sat upright as the narrow door swung outward, admitting the man she had momentarily seen once before in Juana's cabin.

He was no longer pallid and emaciated. As she regarded him some dim recognition floated through her mind, yet tantalizingly eluded the mental grasp she would have put upon it.

He spoke with a kind of native courtesy, displaying a set of even, milky teeth in an evil smile. Then she knew him.

"Pedro, it is you! Are you not satisfied yet? Will you follow me to the death?" He smiled again complacently.

"I will follow the senora no more."

"Oh, my bright, sunny life," she murmured softly. "That you should be brought back to me through such an agency."

He regarded her quietly.

"The senora, like my humbler self, has almost lost sight of the old titles."

"I am only Nelly Kent, now," she said. "And I am Luke Peters."

"Why have you brought me here?" she asked. "Was it you who threw the note?"

"Ay, and wrote it!"

"But I never thought you dead, whatever I might have hoped since you persecuted me so."

"It was not of myself I spoke."

"Of whom, then?"

"Think—guess! Which of those gone to the silent land could you wish for most?"

An intense pain swept over her face.

"Oh, not him," she moaned, to herself, "for he was false as they all are. Nor yet for my little sinless babe, to be and to suffer, perhaps to sin and then die."

Then she conquered herself and returned his eager, questioning gaze steadily.

"Tell me your business and let me go," she said. "The sight of you wears me."

He frowned, but persisted.

"The holiest love you ever knew—"

"Hush!" she cried, angrily. "What can you know of holy things? I would not have a tender memory recalled by you!"

His dark eyes glittered, and his hand clenched involuntarily, but a look of keen cunning replaced his temporary anger.

"Then you shall listen all the more. Let me tell you. Your little child—the brave boy who was your delight, where is he?"

"Dead," she answered, solemnly.

"You saw him in his coffin? You strewed his last pillow with immortelles, and shed sorrowing tears over his grave?"

She broke out with a moaning cry.

"Why do you torture me? Why mock me with the consolation that was never mine?"

He was moved by her agony.

"The boy did not die!" he said.

She made as though she would have sprung at him just as Juana had done, then sunk back, moaning dumbly.

"Listen," he continued. "You could no longer keep him near you. He languished in the close confinement you were obliged to sustain. You sent him away with your faithful Juana, the nurse who had tended you in your infancy. You knew I was on your track, searching for you, the wide world over, but you thought I would never discover your retreat."

"I might never have done so but that I stumbled across Juana and the boy in the Southern sea-shore village. I knew him by his resemblance to you. I watched my chance and stole him from her. 'Twas not done easily, for she was a faithful guardian, but I got him away from her at last."

Then I sought her when she was frantic over his loss, and promised to restore him if she would guide me to you. She lied to me, told me you were dead, but I saw through the flimsy subterfuge. I kept the boy. She dared not tell you of his fate, or that I was on your track. She thought that she had eluded me when she went back and told you her story."

He checked himself suddenly, then resumed:

"I put the boy in safe hands where I knew you would never find him, and have seen him often since. What will you do, or what will you not do, for his restoration?"

"Oh, my child, my little child," she cried out, with a burst of softened, tender tears, such as she had not shed for long years.

"Restore me to my boy and I can freely forgive you all."

"Nothing to gain, nothing to lose," he repeated. "I heard you in the old graveyard, and I said to myself, 'Before another day passes she will kneel to me and beg for that which I alone can give.'"

"And I do, I do," she sobbed, prostrating herself before him. "Pedro, oh, good Pedro, take me to my child!"

His eyes grew hard and glittering.

"On one condition only will you ever see your boy."

She caught her breath—she knew it before he spoke.

"You scorned me once, drove me from you, laughed that I should aspire to your love. I swore to be revenged, and I have embittered your whole life. The fear of me hung over you always like a threatening cloud. I have the power now, and you will never see your boy again, unless you give me the hand you denied me scornfully then. I said I would follow you no more. Neither will I, for you shall never leave me again. Never again!"

She did not attempt to plead with him, but white and crushed, crept back to the pallet of straw.

"Then I shall never see my child. Never again! Better that he had truly died!"

CHAPTER XVI.

COLONEL TEMPLETON closed the hunting-case of his watch with a snap, returning it to his pocket. He rose, taking his hat in his hand.

"The time is up," he said. "Will you favor me with your decision?"

Mr. Ellesford raised his head with slow, painful emotion. He had aged ten years in as many minutes.

"To what would you drive me, Alan Templeton? I can not see my way clearly. Give me time—a week, a day!"

"Oh, well! I must hasten to reach the mill."

His hand was upon the latch, the door swung open beneath his touch. Adria flitted through the passage-way, humming a snatch of song. Templeton glanced over his shoulder.

"Better give your singing-bird a secure cage than to turn it helpless upon a world full of enemies. However, that is your affair!"

"Stop!" cried Mr. Ellesford. "Have you no pity in your heart?"

"Your decision! At best it is but a choice of evils."

"I can not doom my child to poverty and toil."

"You accept the alternative? You will use your authority to bring about this marriage?"

"If I must. My poor, poor Adria! It is for her sake only."

"You have acted wisely," commended Colonel Templeton. "But I can not see it as such a sacrifice. My son is not an ill match."

Mr. Ellesford was scarcely listening.

"I must ask you to press the subject at once," continued the other. "Can I depend upon your doing so?"

"Why not? To-day, if you wish. It will be over the sooner!"

"You are right." After a word or two more, he passed on.

Leaving the Grange, he proceeded in the direction of the bay, but ere long turned into a by-lane, grass-grown and seldom traversed. Beyond this, making a detour about the fields, he came out upon the bank of the noisy little river, and following its course southward, came to the mill.

The man, Luke Peters, came forward from the place to meet him.

"You have changed for the better," the gentleman remarked, carelessly. "Good feeling and secure shelter have thrived you."

"Ay, I'm in condition for job-work again," the other returned, gruffly.

"What's the wind now, Colonel Templeton?"

"You are cynical, my friend. I have come to see after your well-doing."

Peters laughed sneeringly.

"Out with it," he said. "Ill deeds don't require delicate mouthing here."

A shade of vexation crossed Colonel Templeton's brow. He could not sound his tool in the manner he desired.

"It is no work," he said, "only a question. Where is the boy?"

"He'll not trouble you, Colonel Templeton."

"That is not answering. Hark! what is that?"

A wild wail was borne upon the breeze.

"Only the wind," said the other, hastily. "It shrieks through the old shell like something human."

"I should say so," returned the other, dryly. "Very much like a woman. The wind plays queer pranks sometimes. But to the point. I ask you, where is the boy?"

"Where he'll trouble no one. Dead!" said Peters, sullenly.

"Mind what you say," declared Colonel Templeton, menacingly. "Remember that one end of a rope is about your neck, the other in my hand. I'm not apt to be lenient where any one plays me false. Now, have you lied to me?"

"Why should I? It's of no account to me," the man returned, dogged and scowling slightly, but meeting the other's gaze steadily enough.

"True. Well, lie low. I'll see that you get fresh supplies in a day or two."

Wheeling his horse shortly round, he rode away at a brisk canter.

"It's as well," he muttered to himself. "Could Joseph Ellesford know all, he would have little fear of my replacing the true heir, even did he live."

Luke Peters watched the receding form out of sight, and uttered a low, scornful laugh.

"Ay, go, my fine gentleman. But you should remember that others than you can plot and work."

Mr. Ellesford sat silently as he had been left. He tried to fix his mind upon the crisis thus brought home to him, but the alternatives seemed to stare at him out of a blank space in which he could find no foothold to grasp or analyze them.

Adria passing presently, looked in at the door.

"Are you ill, papa?"

"Ill? Yes—no! I am not quite well, I believe. Come here, my daughter."

She advanced, resting her hand upon his shoulder.

"You are pale and faint. What is it, dear?"

"What? Only ruin," he answered, with a sharp, unnatural laugh.

She looked at him with a shade of anxiety on her face. She thought him seriously unwell, slightly delirious, and placed her hand upon his forehead, expecting to find it fever-hot. It was clammy and cold.

There was a flagon of wine on the side-board. She silently filled a glass, holding it to his lips. The generous stimulus imparted brought him back to himself and the situation.

"I did not speak wildly," he said, meeting her glance. "Listen to me, Adria! To ruin stares me in the face, and you alone can avert it. Will my daughter seem to me beggared upon the world when her act can save me?"

"What do you mean?—tell me plainly."

He took another draught of the wine. Then, collecting his faculties, explained briefly.

"You know I have had business difficulties. I can not enter into a detailed account. Colonel Templeton advanced money, bought up claims that were pending, got a hold upon me by which he can reduce me to the strait I have said. He leaves but one gate of escape."

Adria recoiled apprehensively.

"You guess what it is—that you shall marry his son. It is the only alternative, my daughter."

"Papa, is there no mistake? Surely, it can not be so bad! Your business, the great Ellesford estates, they can not all be at stake?"

"Every thing. I would not attempt to influence your choice were the chance less desperate."

"Then let it all go, papa! I have already given Reginald Templeton his final answer. It is worse than ungenerous of him to attempt coercing me through you."

"It is not the young man's doing. I do not know that he is even conscious of his father's intentions. He has sought you honorably and openly—he is in every way fitted to mate with the highest. You must accept him, my daughter!"

"Papa, have you forgotten Kenneth?"



though the corners might be the best in the land," he would bid them begone. Half awake, rubbing his sleepy eyes, he tardily unlocked the door, and was about to demand the business of those who roused him from his nap beside the warm furnace, when a voice anticipated him.

"Does Harnden Forde live here?"

"Yes, sir, 'e does live 'ere," answered the servant, bluntly.

"We wish to see him, then."

"The voice was strange to Eola. Who could it be? was the question that flashed through her mind.

"Well, now," returned the servant, "this 'ere's rather a late hour for folks to be a-comin' to see folks."

"Hark, sirrah! If Harnden Forde is in this house, we will see him, at once, if we have to drag him from his bed!" The voice was determined, threatening.

"Yes, sir, but 'ee see—"

"No 'buts' about it!" interrupted a sharp voice. "Stand aside. Spoil my umbrella over your nose, if you don't! Hear?"

"But, now, 'ee see—" expostulated the servant. They were pushing past him.

"The man was a little frightened. At first he was inclined to yell 'thieves'—then he saw there were females in the party. Next he was on the point of calling for help to oppose this forcible intrusion; but the same sharp voice that had before threatened him with a broken nose, now said:

"Make a noise, and I'll choke you! Cry out, and I'll make you eat some teeth! Fact, Hear? Dangerous, I am. No fooling, now. Where's Harnden Forde, eh? Rascal!—speak quick!"

"He—he's in the p-parlor, sir."

A stamping of feet, the parlor door was pushed back, and Wat, Blake, with Christopher Crewly dancing close to his heels, entered the room.

At sight of these strangers, who entered so unceremoniously—the stern look in Blake's countenance, the burning, searching gaze he fixed upon Eola—all brought her to a sense of her position; and she drew her slender figure erect, her cheeks flushed; she contemplated them with haughty inquiry.

Crewly immediately began a circuit of the room, elevating his nose and darting glances here and there, as if taking an inventory of the furniture.

"Sir, what is the meaning of this?" Eola's bosom heaved; indignation was fast absorbing her emotions.

"Eola! Eola!" Austin Burns sprung forward.

She looked at him, in surprise; but it was only for a second.

"Austin—dear Austin!"

"Found at last, darling, after a most trying hunt!"

Bertha and Ora had entered the room.

"Where is Harnden Forde?" demanded Bertha, her accent somewhat stern.

"Vamoosed, I guess," assumed Crewly, from the depths of an easy chair.

The servant, who had followed them, now gained the center of the tableau. He was about to resume his expostulations, but stopped short, in dumb astonishment, on seeing Austin Burns clasp Eola to him and shower kisses on her willing lips.

Crewly saw the fellow, and made a jump toward him.

"Rascal!" he cried; but the man was gone.

"Where is Harnden Forde?" asked Bertha, again.

"Oh, mother," said Ora, "don't be so stern. Remember your promise to me. Speak gentler."

"Don't, child, don't. Not now. You unnerve me."

"Is Harnden Forde in this house?" thundered Wat, Blake.

"Pitch in! Business," added Crewly.

Eola disengaged herself from her lover, and faced the speaker—faced them all.

"He is. What is your business with him, that it calls for intrusion upon the privacy of our apartments, at this unseemly hour? Why do you ask, in such a tone, to see my father? Who are you? Explain, sir, and quickly—your actions need it."

"Look out, Blake!" admonished the lawyer, who evinced a desire to hide behind a chair, as Eola addressed them spiritedly.

"Eola," said Austin, striving to calm her, "wait a few moments. All may be well. You are hasty. These are my friends—"

"Then they are strange ones!"—even rebuking him, in the warmth of ungovernable resentment, a state for which we can not much blame her. And again, to Blake:

"Will you explain, sir? Gentlemen do not force themselves where there are ladies—at least without some due courtesy, and you have given evidence of none. You have entered here as if you were law deputies, with a search-warrant, and we the thieves! You are silent."

"Eola!" interrupted Austin.

"I say, Wat, Blake—sell out and retire!" Crewly was grinning—something he had never been known to do of late years. The aspect tickled him.

There was a commotion in the next room.

The voices had aroused Harnden Forde—they were not unfamiliar to him.

He regained his feet, staggered to the folding-doors, and looked in upon them.

Bertha, his wronged wife, Wat, Blake, whom he had nearly strangled, on that fearful night in Baltimore; Christopher Crewly, whom he had bribed to aid him in his nefarious schemes, and whose life he afterward attempted, through a hired ruffian—assassin—all these faced him, and leveled upon him glances that entered like burning shafts to the innermost depths of his heart, yet did not at once soften, as if they penetrated the contriteness of his crushed soul.

Weak and dizzy from the effects of his late discovery; alarmed, terrified, chilled upon beholding his victims, concentrated, as it were, against him; and these combined with a harrowing sense of guilt and utter hopelessness—he gasped for breath and reeled forward, under the shock, like a drunken man.

But for the interposition of a strong sustaining arm he would have fallen.

her heart was touched—the sight of misery broke her bosom's steel.

Eola began to comprehend. Her face paled; she glanced, uneasily, from one to another of those assembled.

Forde did not, then, mark the lovers. In the momentary stillness that pervaded, things seemed confused in his vision; he rocked unsteadily upon the arm that supported him.

Even Crewly was affected by the solemn scene—a scene in which a broken spirit, tortured with crimes, bowed low in penitence, and mouths seemed powerless in speech.

"Harnden Forde, nerve yourself," said Wat, Blake. "We are not here to do you ill."

Ora uttered a low exclamation of joy at hearing these assuring words.

"Go to him—go to him, Ora," whispered Bertha, striving to check the tears that would dim her eyes; for she was but woman, after all, with every golden trait by which her sex is made to soar above the ruder molds of earth.

Two loving arms twined about the neck of Harnden Forde; two blue eyes, lustrous in tenderness, were upturned to his; a sweet face centered in his gaze, and Ora, her lips quivering, murmured the one word:

"Father!"

Father! Who called him father? It was not Eola; yet, the voice was very like to hers. There was a music in the accent, a sound that strengthened him.

He saw more distinctly—saw a strange, beautiful face that resembled Eola's.

"Who are you?" he articulated, faintly, taking the fair head between his hands, as if he would read the features closer.

"Your child!" Your child? Was it tremored from her lips?

"My child!" He started; the words were repeated involuntarily.

He raised his head and looked slowly around upon those who stood near.

"Bertha!" How strangely calm his voice and mien!

"Husband! Husband!" at one wild bound she reached his side; with a convulsive effort, he drew her to his breast.

"Oh! Harnden, Harnden, we are not here to torture or to punish, but, to forgive! Yes—we would forgive. Let us make you happy."

"Bertha—poor, injured one!" was all he said, folding her more closely to him.

And this had Ora wrought!

"All is past, Harnden," said Bertha, presently; "all is past and forgiven. Let it lie buried. Our children plead this end, Harnden—our children's happiness. You will take me to you?—for I must, I do forgive all, though it has been much and deep."

"Take you to me, Bertha! Oh! can you, can you erase from your memory, the years that have passed—"

"Not all, dear Harnden; for, there are years a good way back, in which naught but purest love combined in joys of life. But the dark, sad years that have been like a somber pall upon our lives—these shall be buried, forever!"

Forde now, for the first time, observed Austin and Eola. As he marked the fondness with which they clung to each other, a shadow of pain fell upon his face.

"Eola, my child!"—he began, reprovingly; but Bertha, who noted his glance, interrupted.

"No, husband, no—why tear asunder two hearts already molded into one? Why sunder them when, it would seem, Heaven has brought them together?"

"Bertha, Bertha, you know not what you say! Austin Burns is our own child!"

"No—impossible. He is not our child, Harnden."

Eola listened in the suspense of long-pent eagerness. Bertha's words were like rays from heaven to her hopes.

"Not our child!" exclaimed Forde, huskily. "Yes—he is—he must be!"

"No. We have but two; Eola is one—here is the other," pointing to Ora.

"Father!" murmured the lovely girl, as if yearning for his caresses; and Forde, after one long, joyous glance at her face—so like Eola's—embraced her as his own.

"Sister!" The voice was Eola's, and in a second the two sisters were locked in a fond caress.

Christopher Crewly and Wat, Blake were silent witnesses. Austin felt his heart bounding with threefold delight, for he had heard enough to know that he had recovered Eola, and that Bertha must know of his parents.

But the scene of the night was not yet enacted.

"Harnden Forde, I, too, forgive you," said Blake.

"God bless you, then!" cried Forde, grasping the speaker's hand, brown hands.

"But there is one thing yet undone."

"One thing—what?"

"We feel assured you will not hesitate to complete the happiness of all, by performing one more act of duty."

"Name it."

"Restore the Black Crescent!"

Forde hesitated; he trembled slightly; his eyes were fixed in their old look of fear.

"No—no—no," he stammered; "I—I can not do that. Do not ask me. I can not part with it," and Bertha, who held his hands, felt those hands turn cold as ice.

"But, father, have you got it?" Eola's blue eyes twinkled strangely as she put the question.

He cried at once:

"You know?—you know, Eola, where it is?"

"Hear me!" she cried, again; "and maybe I'll tell you something, Harnden Forde, to make you open your eyes!"

It was the old woman who had come upon the scene in the street on carnival day, and that old woman was Mother Bret.

As this new and unexpected actor came forward, two faces, red with rage, that gazed in through the front windows, were withdrawn from their place of observation; two figures started hurriedly down the steps and made off in the darkness.

By all the fiends of the earth, Gil Bret! exclaimed one, "I believe our game is lost!"

"Y-e-s, Haxy; we'll dig out! Beat, by thunder!"

Haxon did not know Mother Bret, and his conclusions were deduced from the general aspect of the situation.

But the bruiser knew her; he heard her loud, shrill words, and it required no great effort to comprehend that she meant to make a disclosure—that disclosure ruinous to himself and associate.

It is here that we part with the two scoundrels. We can not trace them further in their career; but it will be safe to infer that Gil Bret devised some villainous means for their mutual support.

Whether Harold Haxon ever learned his true identity, is a question we must leave unanswered—and it is no matter.

The hag contemplated the assembled parties for a few seconds; a peculiar grin, which added to her ugliness, spread upon her seamed and wrinkled face; then, stepping forward, she spoke again.

"I tell you, Harnden Forde, you can part with the Crescent. Look at me—take a good look. Don't you know me? Is there nothing familiar remaining in my crooked, shriveled face? Speak."

For a moment, he gazed steadfastly upon the time-worn lineaments; then a whisper escaped his lips.

"You—you are—Madame Fernandez—" he hesitated.

"Yes," she assented, slowly, her dark eyes fixed piercingly upon him. "Yes, I am she. It is I who have helped make your life miserable. It was I who aided Louise Ternor in her schemes of ill and violence. But, I am no more a torturer—teller than you are. Do you hear that? I did it for gold—gold! I helped to ruin you! The letter that you got from me, was written by Louise Ternor herself! It was to frighten you—to keep your child from marrying, until her child came old enough; and my son, Gil Bret, was only waiting for somebody to come first—according to the letter—when he'd push in Harold Haxon, and have him marry her—"

"Harold Haxon!" cried Forde, the perspiration standing in great beads on his forehead, as he listened to her speech. "Is Harold Haxon Louise Ternor's child?"

"Yes."

He groaned aloud. Mother Bret continued.

"I'll swear to all I've said. You needn't be afraid to give up the Crescent; Louise Ternor made that tale up, to further cut her rival and enemy, whom she hated! It was her"—pointing to Bertha. "You needn't be afraid to give your child to this young man" (glancing at Austin); "he's not your flesh and blood, that I know; 'cause I've kept track of you pretty close, and I know you've only got two children—there they are."

She raised a skinny finger and pointed toward Eola and Ora.

Ora shrank before the light of those snake eyes, as she had been wont to do, in trembling, oftentimes during that portion of her life passed with the hag.

"And what am I doing all this for?" she added, without a pause. "Hey! What am I saying all this for, now? I'll tell you. I'm getting old—very old—too old. I'm going to die soon—we've all got to die! I thought I'd fix things straight before I went; and I guess I've done it. We have used you pretty hard, in years back. But you know me?—then you know that I needn't want to lie about it. That's all. Now be happy, if you can; you've seen the last of me—the last! Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"Woman! woman!" Harnden Forde leaped forward, to detain her.

Christopher Crewly made a like movement, in which he tripped over his umbrella, fell against a chair, uttered a squeal—then stopped short, made a noise with his lips as one will who enjoys the juice of a peach, at the same time rubbing his shins with vehement rapidity.

Mother Bret had disappeared. As she concluded with that low laugh of sepulchral strain, she vanished, and was seen no more thereafter by those with whom she had been so strangely connected.

"Here is a paper, Harnden Forde," said Blake, "which Harold Haxon held over you to bind you to his will—"

"Give it to me! give—"

"No—I will do this!" and as he spoke, the document so dreaded by the penitent man was scattered in fragments on the carpet.

What more?

The hag's explanation satisfied Forde. His bonds were broken; the Black Crescent was restored.

Eola and Ora are happy in their father's love; Bertha now looks back, with a tender, o'er those years of trial. She and her husband live in a renewal of that affection which the machinations of an evil woman had, for a time, destroyed.

Winter had faded in the genial warmth of spring; the blooming flowers are not brighter than the joys which cluster round Austin Burns and his lovely bride.

To all our characters we say farewell—excepting one: Christopher Crewly has not yet seen his share of adventure, and is destined to figure again in a strange story.

The lawyer was only partially satisfied with the turn things had taken; he had hoped for a grand denouement of police and law cases.

But the gentle Ora soon smoothed even this, and when the old lawyer bade them adieu, to return to Richmond, he stood his umbrella against the wall, while he grasped the young girl's hands, and said:

"It's all right. Yours forever—much!"

THE END.

Every Moment Sunday.—By different nations every day in the week is set apart for public worship. Sunday, by Christians; Monday, by the Grecians; Tuesday, by the Persians; Wednesday, by the Assyrians; Thursday, by the Egyptians; Friday, by the Turks; Saturday, by the Jews. Add the fact of the diurnal revolutions of the earth, giving every variation of longitude a different hour, and it becomes apparent that every moment is Sunday somewhere.

FAITHFUL LIVES.

BY BRAT TINK.

Sure there are faces on life's way
That weave a sweet control,
And hands whose very clasps betray
The sweetness of the soul.

And there are hearts of patience, born
Of tenderness and faith,
That falter not though life be scorn
And alter not in death.

Like flowers in lonely nooks they are
Of conscious look and bloom,
That on the desert places shower
Their blessings of perfume.

They are around us, hearts like these,
They can not be unknown,
From eastern shores to western seas
Love claims them all her own.

Whichever way our lot may lie,
God grant this one request,
We may lay a down to die
And go and be at rest.

That some such faithful friends may calm
Our last hour of decay,
And soothe our pains with friendship's balm
Before we pass away.

OLD GRIZZLY,

The Bear-Tamer:

OR, THE WILD HUNTRESS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS.

AUTHOR OF "THE PHANTOM PRINCESS; OR, NED HAZEL, THE ROY THRAPPER," "THE BLACKFOOT QUEEN; OR, OLD SICK WHIFFLES IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH," ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE STRANGE STORY.

MECHANICALLY they seated themselves side by side, and began as do those who have much to say, and have been denied the opportunity for years; and, as the others listened, they learned a strange story.

Something over five years preceding the opening of this story, a party of emigrants numbering something like a dozen, left St. Louis, on their way to Oregon. Among them was a man named J. J. Hammond—his full given name being Jubal Jason—his wife, Rosa, and child, a little girl, some six or seven years old. They were affectionately devoted to each other, and, having been separated some time, met by appointment in St. Louis, and joined the company, which was composed entirely of friends and acquaintances.

Before starting, an old hunter presented Mrs. Hammond with a young bear, which was intelligent, and displayed the greatest attachment to the woman; and, when they started west, the cub accompanied them, growing fatter and bigger with every day of their advance. He became very useful and frequently accompanied Hammond and his wife on their little hunting expeditions.

Nothing unusual occurred until they had passed beyond the region of the Black Hills, when, one afternoon, husband and wife started off on a little excursion of their own, he being mounted on a coal-black mustang, and she upon her white horse.

They became separated in a range of hills, but, as each knew the way back to camp, no alarm was felt, and, when it began to grow dark, they started on their return.

Rosa, the wife, came in last, and a most terrible surprise awaited her. She had heard the firing of guns and shouts while at a distance, but suspected nothing, until she rode into the narrow gorge, where the camp had been placed. There she found that, during her absence, the entire party had been massacred by a war-party of Indians!

For one moment she stood transfixed; then turned and fled to her father's house.

Gazing at the mangled forms stretched here and there, lying as they fell, she had failed to see that of her husband, or child, which had been left in charge of an emigrant, and she now started to warn him of his danger, and to induce him to fly with her.

But she was mistaken. Hammond had returned in time to join in the fight, and he was the last victim of the treacherous fiends, falling some distance outside of the ghastly scene, when, seeing no more victims for their fury, the Indians drew off and vanished.

The shock that the woman had received unsettled her mind somewhat. She became in reality a monomaniac, possessed of the idea that her husband was roaming over the country on his black mustang seeking her, while she sought him.

After a hunt of several days, she returned to camp, thinking that he might be awaiting her there; but she found that all the bodies had disappeared, and the wagons ransacked and burned. She tarried here but a little while. Still possessed with her original idea, she remounted her horse and started on her wanderings.

Providence led her to the cave on the mountain-top, which she fixed up as her home, and then resumed her search for her husband and child. Often at night her voice might be heard calling from the peaks the name of those whom she loved above all others, and the howling winds of winter frequently bore that strange, wild cry over prairie and stream.

Everywhere she searched following up rivers, climbing craggy peaks, where the snow was whirled in blinding eddies; through still canons, down gorges and ravines, in trackless forests, and over the broad, sweeping prairie; everywhere she seemed to gallop on the back of her white horse, with the brown bear at her side. Her form became familiar to the Blackfeet, in whose vicinity she hunted, led by some strange impulse, (for she had no means of knowing what tribe claimed the war-party that massacred her friends), and they regarded her with the deepest superstition, and fled before her approach as if she were a veritable apparition from the grave. No Indian ever dared to fire a shot at her, and so great was the terror inspired by her that more than once the Blackfeet seriously meditated changing their location, simply to free themselves of her presence.

The skill of the huntress enabled her to provide herself and her strange companion with all the food they could need, and when she ran short of powder and ammunition, she went directly among the Blackfeet and demanded it. There was little fear of her being refused.

When Rosa Hammond returned to the camp, shortly after the massacre of the emigrants, and found that everybody had been removed, it was because they had been buried by another party of emigrants, who, removing some of the effects from the corpses, passed on to California.

From the body of J. J. Hammond was taken his rifle, a watch, a pocket-book and

ring. These were carried to San Francisco, where the man who possessed them encountered Richard Hammond, and passed them over to him.

Richard, as has already been intimated, was the only brother of the slain man, and the two had been bound together by the love of Damon and Pythias. When he learned that the murder had been committed by the Blackfeet, he shouldered his rifle, and, with a desperate rage, started with the determination to avenge his death.

For years he roamed mountain and prairie, picking off the members of this tribe whenever opportunity offered; and the desperate adventures and hairbreadth escapes that befell him, while thus engaged, would of themselves fill a volume.

Selecting the admirable retreat on the island in the river, to which reference has already been made, Hammond, the Avenger—known as *Warrana*, the Evil Spirit, among the Blackfeet—pursued his career of war to the knife against them, but was finally captured, and taken to the village in triumph.

At the opening of our story we depicted the manner of his rescue. He had often heard of the Huntress, or White Spirit of the Mountain, as the Indians termed her, and, indeed, had not infrequently seen her from a distance; but had shunned her acquaintance until she befriended him in that trying moment. Hammond had remained totally unsuspecting of her identity up to the time of meeting her upon the mountain when attacked by the panther, and, even then, he had only a dim, uncertain idea that he had seen the face somewhere before, not supposing it to be his sister-in-law, as he concluded she must have fallen with the others in the terrible massacre. Such was the history of the Red Avenger and the Wild Huntress of the Hills.

But there still remained one material point unexplained.

The men who had brought in the murdered man's rifle had said nothing of finding the remains of the little child. All the others were accounted for, but of her no sign remained.

It was known that the Indians sometimes spared the lives of very young children under such circumstances, and there had always been a hope indulged by the Avenger that she was living among some of the tribes. The account given by Leaping Elk of the coming of Silver Tongue, from the Snow Mountains of the North, had awakened a new train of ideas in the hunter's mind. Why might not the missing child yet be living in the person of the chief's daughter?

Old Grizzly, who was so well versed in Indian ways, declared that she was white, and had been adopted into the tribe as the daughter of Big Hand.

During the long conversation that took place between the hunter and the Wild Huntress, the former gleaned from her rambling, uncertain account of things that had transpired, that she too believed Silver Tongue to be her lost child!

For years she had roamed over that vast extent, visiting many different tribes in search of her loved ones, and had finally learned that this portion of the Blackfeet—the same tribe who had committed the wholesale murder of the emigrants—had in their possession a white girl who was acknowledged as the chief's daughter. Thither had she hastened, and had been, for a long time, hanging around the village, trying to rescue the girl from the Indians' power.

Once she had met Silver Tongue in the forest, but the girl would listen to no assertions made by the mother. On the contrary, she became much alarmed, and fled back to the village. Time and constant association with those by whom she was surrounded, had nearly effaced remembrance of her former life. This stood matters at the time when we bring our characters together at the bear-tamer's camp.

It can

capable to prevent her doing so. The mention of her child, and the assertion that she should soon see her, had calmed her down, and she now sat a little way off, buried in profound thought.

At the moment of again reintroducing our characters, the bear-tamer was speaking.

"What was the word ye sent the gal, boy?" he asked.

"I requested her to meet me at the rock by the falling waters," replied the young man.

"Will she do it, think 'ee?"

"Leaping Elk says that she will be there at the rising of the moon; and I think he is not mistaken," answered Alfred.

"Yur do, do yur?" laughed Old Grizzly.

"Wal, they will do a most enny thing when they git in the fix; an' I reckon we shan't be disappointed."

"I hope not, not only for your sake, but for hers," said Hammond, pointing to the bowed figure of the huntress. "And yet, it is all a chance. She may not be able to recognize her mother, and so will refuse to leave her adopted father."

"Perhaps," said Alfred Badger, with a slight smile.

"As I understand the plan, then," said Hammond, "we are all to go, taking her with us, and await near by while Alfred pines the way for an interview between mother and daughter."

"Jes so," replied Old Grizzly. "It won't take the sun long to git down yander, an' ontill it doose we must stay hyer, fur them Blackfeet ar' pizen mad."

Slowly, despite the assertion of the bear-tamer, the hours glided by, but, at last, night came, and an almost impenetrable darkness settled over the earth.

During the last hours of daylight the impatience of Alfred Badger had with difficulty been kept in bounds, and when, at last, Old Grizzly gave the word to move, he bounded to his feet with an exclamation of joy, that brought a broad grin on the face of his old friend.

"He ar' hurt bad, that's no mistake about it," he muttered, as he busied about his weapons.

The bears were all seen to, as was the white horse, who had been brought inside; the dog was placed, as usual, on watch at the entrance, and then the little party started out on their perilous enterprise.

We have already described the way by which the rendezvous selected was reached. Along the base of the foot-hills, skirting the timber, over the dangerous open ground and into the sheltered ravine, where the chances of discovery were much lessened.

"Stiddy now," whispered Old Grizzly, as they arrived at the point where the ravine curved. "Stand hyer, an' let me an' the boy see what's ahead, an' cautiously ascending the right-hand slope, the two were lost sight of in the undergrowth.

Perhaps a quarter of an hour passed, during which time the moon rose, when a stealthy footstep descended, and the bear-tamer, alone, came up.

"It ar' all right," he said, in the same cautious tone. "The gal ar' thar. Her an' the boy ar' palaverin' away. Leapin' Elk ar' on watch to'ard the village, an' I reckon things ar' about squal." Come ahead."

Hammond, so we henceforward call the Avenger, leading the Wild Huntress by the hand, closely followed, and ere long all three stood upon the edge of the clearing that surrounded the rock.

A charming picture stood revealed in the clear moonlight near the center of that opening.

It consisted of the forms of the lovers, Alfred Badger and the maiden, Silver Tongue. His arm was thrown lightly around her waist, while one of hers rested upon his shoulder in a manner replete with grace.

They were conversing in low tones, such as are always used on like occasions.

"The Young Eagle has broken his bonds and flown from the Strong Lodge of the Blackfeet," said the young hunter, adopting the figurative style of the Indians, "but his heart remained behind."

"Could not Pe-to-pee-kiss have been happy with my people?" asked the girl, in a low, sad tone.

"The Blackfeet are not the people of Silver Tongue," was the startling reply.

The girl started from her position with a low half-frightened exclamation; then, recovering herself, she drew piously up and replied:

"Silver Tongue is the daughter of Big Hand, the chief of the Blackfeet."

"No, no, dear Silver Tongue. Listen to the Young Eagle. He loves you, and would not speak falsely in your ear. Big Hand stole Silver Tongue from the white people, my people, when she was but a little child."

These words appeared to have a most powerful effect upon the maiden. She again drew back, her bosom heaving with suppressed emotion, while her large dark eyes regarded Alfred with a startled look; then, dropping her head, she remained long buried in thought.

Was memory at work, gathering up the broken links of other years? Perhaps; and so no word was spoken to break the charm.

Stepping lightly on one side, the young hunter made a slight motion to the bear-tamer, and instantly the latter emerged, leading the Wild Huntress of the Hills.

The sound caused Silver Tongue to glance hastily up, and as she saw herself surrounded by so many strange faces, she turned quick as thought, and, but for the rapid movement of the young hunter, she would have been away to the village.

"Stay, dear Silver Tongue!" he exclaimed. "They are friends! They will do you no harm!"

The sound of her lover's voice acted like magic upon the startled girl. She paused, turned back, and trustingly placed her hand in Alfred's. But, if the sudden meeting had startled the girl, its effect was ten times more powerful upon the woman.

When within a few paces of where Silver Tongue was standing, she abruptly paused, snatched her hand from the bear-tamer's grasp, and pushing back from her forehead the masses of hair that the night-wind had disheveled, she gazed with straining, staring eyes upon the young girl. Silver Tongue drew close into the arm that was again thrown round her, and silently returned the gaze.

"Oh, this horrid mist that is ever shrouding my eyes!" murmured the huntress, passing her hand again and again across her brow. "Is it a dream such as so often comes to me in the darkness of the night? She was lost long, long ago, and yet I see her again before me! Agnes! Little Agnes!" she whispered, drawing a little nearer, and holding out both arms with a yearning gesture to the girl. "How tall she has grown

since that awful night! Then she was a little child, and now— Agnes, I— Don't you know me? Your mother, child. See," she continued, in the strained whisper, while she rapidly felt in the bosom of her dress, from which she drew forth a pretty ivory toy, beautifully gilded and carved.

"See!" holding it forth with trembling hand; "that is yours. I have kept it all these years, and now—"

With a quick eager, almost childish delight, the young girl sprang forward and grasped the toy. "It is mine!" she exclaimed, breaking in upon the mother's pleadings, and rapidly turning it over and over in her hands.

Then the pent-up emotion of the mother's heart burst uncontrollably forth. The act of the young girl claiming, recognizing, as her own a toy that had belonged to her child, dissipated all doubts, and, as the flood of tears poured down the mother's pale cheeks, they seemed to wash away the mists that had so long clouded her mind.

The wild, fierce light died out in her eyes, and was replaced by a look such as only a mother could bestow upon a beloved child.

"Oh! my child, my Agnes! Do you not recognize me? Look! look in my face and see if it has not sometimes come to you in your dreams! Can none of you help me?" she said, turning to those around. "Speak to her, you, sir, and tell her that I am her mother!"

But it needed not that any other should speak. The voice of nature, aided by the little trifle—the ivory toy—opened up the flood-gates of memory, and as if by a sudden rending of the veil of the past, the young girl saw and knew her mother!

Dropping the precious relic, and suddenly twisting herself loose from her lover's arms, Silver Tongue bounded one step forward, paused an instant, to look once more into that face once so loved, and then, with a shrill cry of delight, she threw herself into the arms that were outstretched to receive her.

Patial cry! Even at the moment of supreme joy, the very words of the daughter recognizing and acknowledging her parent were destined to bring about them a peril from which there might be no escape!

The stern, rugged features of the two older men, especially Old Grizzly, were moved to the utmost, and about the eyes of the latter there was a suspicious moisture as he gazed upon the scene.

So absorbed were all, that they took no note of the shrill cry uttered by Silver Tongue, nor would they have done so had not Leaping Elk come bounding into their midst, with every feature expressive of alarm.

"Why talk so loud?" he said, hastily. "Fly! Blackfeet awake, and hear Silver Tongue!" he said, rapidly.

His words were only too true, for at that moment, a long, keen yell out the air, instantly repeated and taken up by others, until the very night was hideous with its infernal din.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 82.)

The Ocean Girl:

OR,

THE BOY BUCCANEER.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST,

AUTHOR OF "CRUISER CRUISE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BUCCANEER'S EXPLANATION.

HAPPINESS is relative. The Admiral felt deeply grateful for his escape with his crew and the passengers; but scarcely had his feelings been indulged in, when other sentiments assumed sway over him.

The loss of his daughter seemed—now that he had leisure to think of himself—to paralyze his energies.

While there had been something to do, he had held up. But now that he had a cabin to retire to, and could be, as it were, alone with his God, he gave way fully to his deep and overwhelming grief.

The vessel was bound for India, was, indeed, a frigate sent out to reinforce that very fleet of which he was once again the commander.

A week brought them to the China seas. They had had fair weather for a while, but now an almost dead calm prevailed.

At daybreak, the sun fell upon flapping sails.

No seaman required to be told that they were near land. The color of the ocean showed him quite plainly that the water had shoaled, and that it was necessary to keep a sharp lookout—all the more that a thick, hazy fog prevailed.

There was not an atom of wind, and the ocean had assumed the placid character of a sleeping lake.

The sails flapped, it is true; but it was only from what the sailors picturesquely call the breathings of the morn.

All was soft, mild and placid.

The Admiral and all the officers of the ship were on the deck, looking around them and conversing quietly after their morning meal, principally, it must be allowed, about the wind.

A hundred stout and stalwart sailors were hanging on different parts of the rigging, laughing, joking and speaking to their messmates below, in that low and respectful tone always assumed in the presence of officers.

There was little to do; but the discipline of a vessel is not consonant with idleness. Officers must find the men something to do, or there would be no commanding them.

The duties of this morning were, however, trivial.

The Admiral, after some few words of course with his officers, stood apart, wrapt in deep thought. One might have fancied him anxious about the weather, from the way in which his quick eye roved from the deck to the light fleecy clouds that floated in the blue vacuum above.

"I think the wind is coming," said the captain, after some hours had passed.

At the same time an officer began to take the altitude of the sun. Having carefully, as far as the haze would allow him, settled this important matter, he announced that it was twelve o'clock.

"Then make it twelve o'clock," replied the captain, in nautical phraseology.

The bell sounded at once.

Then the haze began to disperse, the sun shone out, and the morning breeze freshened for a mile around the sea was clear, and the vapor in huge fleeces rolled off before the wind.

"A sail!" cried a dozen voices.

The Admiral turned slowly round, expecting to see a merchantman lazily making its way under their lee.

He started and turned pale.

"By heavens! it is the pirate," he cried; "beat to quarters."

The order was instantly obeyed, and almost ere the tap of the drum was heard, the men were at their stations.

The officers then advanced, and reported that their several divisions were quite ready to engage the enemy; the topmen and sail-trimmers were examined and found ready;

the shot-flags and stoppers were seen to; the magazines were opened, the arm-chests emptied; while down in the hold the surgeon began laying out his case of terrible instruments.

"All hands clear ship far astern!" was the next order given, and cheerfully obeyed, though little remained to be done.

The frigate now yielded to the breeze, and increased her velocity; the water gathered under her bows in a little rolling wave of foam, and the chase commenced.

Meanwhile, on board the pirate all was confusion.

Captain Gantling, after instructing his officers to make sail as rapidly as possible, ordered Ned, and his supposed boy companion, Loo, to his own cabin.

The buccaneer was pale, but resolute; his very illness seemed to have disappeared.

"Boy," he said, "it is likely this may be our last fight. I wish that we may be friends."

"How can I be friends with the murderer of my father?"

"I tell thee, boy, 'tis false."

"The Admiral asserts it."

"The Admiral lies!"

"My father—never!" said Loo, in an indignant tone.

The pirate turned upon the supposed boy, while Edward drew the trembling girl to his side.

"So!" laughed the buccaneer, "this is the daughter of mine enemy."

"She is my ward, and I will defend her with my life!" cried Ned.

"Silence, boy—I will not harm her. But listen to me, calmly. You assert that I am the murderer of your father. I will tell you the truth, and you shall judge between us."

He waved them to a seat. The way in which the flooring bent from its level showed how the breeze was increasing.

"I was midshipman on board the same vessel as the Admiral and your father—"

"But who was my father?"

"He was Sir Edward Rawdon, the Admiral's elder brother."

"Then I—"

"You are Sir Edward Rawdon. But of that anon. Your father was a strict disciplinarian, and I, a somewhat light-hearted and merry boy, was fond of shore and of the many amusements it affords. After I had been in the service one year, I obtained a fortnight's leave of absence, during which I went home. I had many friends, and in their company I forgot my duties. That is, I stayed eight days after my time; and when I rejoined my ship I found that I was dismissed the service. On my knees I implored your father to reinstate me, promising that the devotion of a life should repay the favor."

The buccaneer turned away to hide deep emotion.

"But I have heard a very different story," said Ned.

"Wait. I was spurned, but after a while I was taken into favor again. The rest you know."

"I know that my father had reason for disliking you."

"May. But why should he have persecuted me? That matters not. I had to join a desperate set of men; I became a smuggler. One night, when on a desperate enterprise, I met your father. He was walking in his own park, which I crossed to avoid the highway. We met, face to face, in the moonlight."

"Scoundrel! what do you here?" he said, boldly.

"My blood was up."

"Tyrant and slave!" I replied, 'now is my time for vengeance!'

"My pistol was cocked; but, as he stood calmly and firmly my heart misgave me. I could not murder him in cold blood."

"I could slay you as you stand," I said; 'but I will not. You remember I was an officer and a gentleman once. Take this pistol, and let luck decide between us.'

"He took my pistol without a word, and we retired to a distance in the pale moonlight. When about twelve yards apart he halted, facing one another with looks of deadly hatred."

"Art ready, ruffian?" he said. 'At your answer, I fire.'

"Ready!" I cried.

"Hate nerved my arm, for the next instant he lay dead at my feet. The ball had been merciful, for it penetrated the brain. No sooner was the deed done, than my soul was more in arms against him than ever. Self-preservation, however, was imperative; and, at its dictates, I hurried away. In my hurry, I passed near the house, where, waiting for the baronet, there was a nurse, with a boy about two years of age."

"She was looking out to call the baronet to supper."

"Stealthily I crept behind her, and clapping my hands on your mouth, I hastened away with you, without being discovered."

"Then came rewards for my apprehension; and for two years was I hunted over England by Sir Stephen—as if he were not glad to be a baronet and heir to a fine estate."

"He is not dead," said Loo; "and will give up all to dear Edward here."

"Is this possible?"

"I am certain he would do any thing that was noble and generous," said Edward; "but while he lives he shall enjoy that which he has thought his own."

"There is little time to lose, boy. I have been ill; and during my illness, strange fancies have come over me—sorrow for my misspent life, and deep regrets for the past. In this packet you will find my full confession, and the proofs of your birth. If Sir Stephen means honestly, they will satisfy him. Ned, through all these years I have loved you and hoped to have died with you near me as a son. It was not to be. All I now ask is your forgiveness, since I can not have your friendship."

"Tis given; and now what will you do? You must remember that Sir Stephen Rawdon is probably a prisoner on those bleak shores where we escaped."

"The king's ship will seek him."

"Do you, then, mean to surrender?"

"No; but I will restore you to the cruiser. If we escape, well and good; if not, we must fight."

He then led the way on deck. The wind was now strong and steady; the frigate was coming up with great rapidity.

"Out with the jolly-boat!" said the captain, sternly.

The officers stared; but the chief was himself again, and they were in presence of a powerful enemy.

"You will descend into the boat," he continued, "which has a small mast. The sea is smooth. In half an hour you will be safe. They must halt to take you on board; that time may save us. See you yonder mounds of earth?"

Ned looked, and made out the points of two rocks.

"We can pass between them, but yonder frigate would strike. If we can reach them, we are safe. Farewell, forever!"

"They were lowered into the boat, which was at once cast adrift. One glance—he was standing, with pale face and earnest mien, gazing at them—and they were gone.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CONCLUSION.

"WHAT is the vagabond up to?" said the Admiral to the nearest officer.

"He has put out a boat, which is making our way," replied the officer.

"What on earth can he mean? He has clapped on every wing, and yet would treat with us?" exclaimed Sir Stephen. "What is to be done?"

"There are only two hands in the boat," observed one who had a powerful glass; "and were it not impossible, I should say one was Ned Drake."

"In the name of the most merciful Creator," gasped the Admiral, "who is the other?"

"A slighter, smaller boy," said the officer.

"I do not like to be sure, Sir Stephen; but I think it is Miss Loo."

A loud shout from the officers and passengers of the late Indian arose.

"Heave to!" said the Admiral, in a husky voice.

The order was obeyed, and three minutes later the nephew and daughter were in the arms of the enraptured Admiral.

"But the pirate?" said his captain, touching his hat.

"Curse the pirate!" was the hasty reply.

"I beg pardon, set all sail in chase."

"May I speak to you in private, Admiral?" asked Ned.

"Come this way, my dear boy," replied the other; and he led him into his state cabin.

Ned told him all that passed between himself and Captain Gantling.

"Hum—not so bad as I thought. Well, duty must be done; as I must hang him if I catch him, perhaps it will be better if he escapes. Come out, my dear boy."

They went on to the deck, and watched the scene. The buccaneer was now close upon a wind, making for a cluster of low islands.

The Admiral's face brightened.

"Captain Howard," he said to the flag officer, "we must take soundings. Yonder fellow has a shallow draught, and can run where we should strike."

The necessary orders were given, and an officer stood by the leadsmen to report.

"By the mark, seven"—that is, seven fathoms—was the first cry, which marked ample water.

Five minutes elapsed.

"By the mark, five."

This was also quite sufficient. The next report was looked for with great interest, especially by the crew, to whom the prospect of a fight was particularly pleasing.

"By the mark, four; by the mark, three," rapidly followed.

"Ready, about," cried the Admiral, "quick! Forward! All hands 'bout ship—hands by the topgallant clew-lines."

In a few minutes the ship had turned away from that dangerous coast, and was running free to go round the islands.

By this time the pirate was in a narrow channel, and an hour later, it was but a speck of white upon the ocean.

Nor was she ever seen by any of our friends more, though they heard such a craft had been sold to one of the native princes of that strange and picturesque region. What became of Gantling never could be ascertained.

Sir Stephen would not keep the title, though people persisted in calling him by it. Edward served with distinction in the war; and when his uncle was invalided, he went home, took up his residence in Kent, and—

Well—married Loo, of course.

"Who else would have me?" she said, when he asked her the question, "after running about like a distressed damsel with her knight-errant?"

"I had some notion of that," smiled Edward, "when I asked you."

For which remark he received a gentle box on the ear, which he did not return—at all events, not exactly in the same way.

THE END.

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BETSEY AND I ARE OUT AGAIN.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Stop, Mr. Lawyer, How do de? I'm off upon a tour. As Betsey and me are out again, and this time it's for sure. For, after we had made it up and put away old scores. She heard that I had fished to get a license of divorce.

Well, I come in to supper and there wasn't any there. She stood beside the chimney and she eyed me rather queer. Says I, "My sweetie, dumpy dear, what does mean all of this?" She spit at me and then she says, "I'll tell you why it is!"

"You've been and gone to see the Square to get things cut in halves. To separate the property and make fractions of ourselves. And so it rather seems to me that I am at a loss if I don't send you there ag'in with a little better cause."

With that she grabbed my hair and bumped my head against the wall. It rattled all the winders and it made the plasterin' fall. The more I yelled the more she bumped with all her mighty main. I thought that I was doomed to die of softenin' of the brain.

She sent me over seven cheers and then into the fire. She ram'd me in a tub of suds till I thought I would expire. She struck me with the shovel and she bent it rather short. And threw hot water on me, which was quite too warm for sport.

With doubled fists she banged my eyes; she stomped me on the floor. She scratched my face all over like a thousand cats or more. She whaled me with a cowhide and she pelted me with the broom. She struck me one upon the jor that sent me 'cross the room.

She knocked my nose quite endways and she bruised me up quite sore. When I bolted from the house and then she bolted up the door. So, Mr. Lawyer, I am off to make a furra tour. For Betsey and me is out ag'in, and this time it's for sure.

The Sailor's Choice.

BY ROGER STARBUCK.

EVERY man should know his own heart, as regards the affections. And yet there may be cases where, between two lovely young women, he would find it difficult to decide which to make his wife.

For instance, Darcy Morton, sailing master aboard the U. S. cutter, White Sand, bound to Liverpool, carrying, among a few passengers—friends of the captain—an old man, Mr. Warren, and his two pretty daughters, aged respectively nineteen and twenty. Louisa and Laura—the names of these two—were both of the same type of beauty—the brunette.

Laura, dark eyes, soft, rippling curls of black hair, little forms, lively manners, musical voices, etc., etc., were among their attractions.

Darcy was a quiet, handsome young fellow, broad-shouldered, active, and as strong as a lion.

His manliness attracted both the young women, and, as he had previously been slightly acquainted with their father, he was soon on friendly terms with the girls.

He liked them both, while remarking that, in many respects, they differed.

Louisa was something of a coquette, and would toss her head like a young colt whenever she spoke to him. He rather liked that toss of the head, although some persons would have termed it frivolous. But it is just such little frivolous nothings that please us when we are young.

Laura, while equally as lively as her sister, was more frank, and had but just enough of the coquette in her nature to give zest to conquest.

Darcy said to himself: "I love both, but—but—confound it, if I know which to take!"

Off the Bahamas, a terrific gale pounced upon the *Scud*, threatening to take all.

The spray flew mast high—the broad ocean was one white mass of turbulent thunder—the cutter, down upon her beam-ends, drove on, with rattling, flying sheets, slatting canvas, cracking masts, and booming timbers—while fore and aft, sweeping away caboose, hatches, wheelhouse, etc., came the angry seas, knocking away both bulwarks for admittance.

The gale was rather sudden. Darcy, at the time, was on deck with both the girls.

He had no time to take them into the cabin, so he lashed them both to the mainmast.

"Help me! Save me!" screamed Louisa, throwing both arms round his waist.

"My poor papa!" cried Laura, on the other side of the mast, glancing to leeward—"he has been swept overboard! Papa, oh, papa!"

Meanwhile the sails were torn from all the yards; over went the foremast with a crash.

"I shall be killed!" screamed Louisa.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"Ah, why didn't that cruel sea take me instead of father?" moaned Laura, in agony, clasping both hands.

She seemed to think nothing of herself, in that time of peril; her thoughts were all upon her poor father, whereas Louisa, as shown, thought so much of herself—of her own danger—that she paid no heed to that of her parent.

Darcy noted the difference. But he must not tarry where he now was; there was work to be done.

He tore himself from Louisa, who began upbraiding him for doing so, snatched an ax, and, at the imminent peril of his life, cleared away the foremast.

He caught a glimpse of poor Mr. Warren, far to leeward, clinging to a hen-coop.

"Captain," he said to the commander, "can't we lower and save—"

"Lower?" interrupted the captain; "our boats are all stoven. God help us all!"

A roaring, gurgling sound was heard!

It was the water pouring into the hold!

The schooner soon, yawing fearfully, made preparations for her last plunge!

Darcy ran to cut the girls clear from the mainmast. Louisa, beside herself with fear, clinging to his arms, greatly impeding his movements.

"Sister!" pleaded Laura, "you hinder him! He will lose his own life in trying to save us!"

"Save me! save me! me! me!" cried Louisa, who could only seem to think of herself!

"Jump, all hands, and save yourselves!" screamed the captain. "Take hold of whatever you can in the water and hang to it for life! We can do no better, now!"

They all sprung overboard, some clinging to drifting hatches, others to floating spars, while a few wretches were without any thing to save them from going down.

"Now, Laura and Louisa!" Darcy had said, pointing to a floating topsail yard, "I am going to jump over with you, and keep you to that spar, if I can."

"Oh, dear! I shall perish!" moaned Louisa.

"Hush, sister," said Laura. "We will do as you say, or try to," addressing Mr. Morton.

"That's right," said the young man, encouragingly; "and now for it!"

With that—an arm round the waist of each of the young women—Darcy jumped.

He threw himself toward the spar. Laura grasped it, thus relieving him of her weight; but Louisa, beside herself with fear, threw both arms round his neck, while gurglingly gasping: "Save me! save me!"

Vainly the young man endeavored to extricate himself; Louisa hung to him like a dead weight.

He was fast suffocating, when he threw up an arm, as a sea for a moment half lifted him up, rolling him and his burden over and over.

His arm rose near the spar to which Laura was clinging. She caught at the hand, and, with all the strength she could exert, aided by the rush of the water, she drew it toward the spar, to which she was securely fastened, having become somehow tightly entangled among the ropes attached to it, so that she could not drift away.

Darcy, half under water, recognized that clutch. It saved him; he threw his arm further out and caught at the spar.

Then he drew himself up by his one arm, and succeeded in getting Louisa—half senseless now—away from his neck, and in lashing her to the piece of timber.

Thus the castaways drifted on, Louisa continually bemoaning their uncomfortable situation, and expressing fears for herself, while Laura conducted herself with quiet, womanly fortitude, now and then directing a pitying glance at Mr. Morton, whose shoulder was bleeding from a contusion caused by his efforts to save Louisa.

Ere this the cutter had gone down; the castaways were alone upon the vast ocean. In an hour, however, the storm subsided, and before night they were fortunately picked up by a New Orleans trader, the captain of which treated them kindly.



THE SAILOR'S CHOICE.

Among the saved was Mr. Warren, who had been found still clinging to the hen-coop. The captain and ten of the sailors were also rescued; the remainder of the crew, fifteen in number, had perished.

"Thank God! you are safe!" cried Laura, rushing into her father's arms, with a cry of wild joy. Louisa also glided to his side.

"Oh, papa!" cried the latter; "you came near losing me!"

"There!" said Darcy to himself. "I can no longer hesitate which to choose for a wife. One is very selfish—the other perfectly disinterested! Of course I'll take Laura!"

He did so a few months later, and found her a treasure of a wife.

Recollections of the West.

A Flying Shot.

BY CAPT. BRUNN ADAMS.

ONE of the most thrilling adventures of a long life amid the Western wilds, and in which, by the way, was mingled just a drop of the romantic element, happened in this way:

For reasons not necessary to be given here, I once found myself, toward the close of an autumn day, amid the rugged peaks and lovely valleys of the Mongolian range of mountains.

This latter expression may sound paradoxical to many of my readers, but in truth it is not, for he who visits this region may stand in a valley whose equal in beauty may scarcely be found, and yet there will rise upon either hand lofty peaks, whose summits appear to pierce the clouds, and whose sides are rent by gaping seams, gloomy canons and frightful precipices, that even to look upon causes the brain to reel with a sensation of giddiness.

Pausing a moment upon the crest of a ridge to allow my wearied horse a short breathing spell, I turned my eyes upon the valley that lay beneath my feet, seeking to discover the character of the path over which I was to travel, at the same time enjoying the lovely scene that was just being enshrouded in shadow as the sun dropped behind a distant range.

Almost the first object that arrested my wandering gaze was the unexpected spectacle of a thin column of blue smoke curling upward from amid a dense grove of timber that bordered upon a small stream that ran through the valley.

Such a smoke in the wilderness always tells the presence of man—either that he is there, or has recently been there—and hence the traveler may be certain of one of two things. It is either a friend or a foe who has built it, and he has to regulate his actions accordingly.

But a man experienced in the "ways of the border" can readily tell whether the fire is the work of a white man, or whether it serves the purposes of a war-party of Indians.

I saw at a glance that it was the former, and, without further survey, gave my horse the rein and began the descent.

The valley into which I was about penetrating was of considerable extent. Through the center, as I have intimated, there ran a small stream, along whose banks there were, at intervals, clumps or "mottes" of timber, outside of which, and reaching to the foot of the hills upon either side, the ground was free from tree or bush, and covered with a carpet of rich green grass. The trail that I had been following lay across the savanna, and struck the timber some half or three-quarters of a mile below the point where I had observed the smoke; thence turning at right-angles to its former course, it ran along the stream, following its sinuosities beneath the overhanging arches of foliage.

Within the timber a twilight gloom pervaded, the light being scarcely strong enough to distinguish objects at a distance of twenty or thirty rods, a good place for surprise or ambuscade, and hence I unslung my rifle, and threw it across the pommel of the saddle.

Traversing the first clump, and crossing the intervening space of open ground, I again entered the grove that lay beyond.

Hardly had I done so, when my horse threw forward his ears, and abruptly halted, while from behind the leafy screen that shut in the view ahead there suddenly arose, sweet and clear on the evening air, the notes of a song sung by a female voice.

The effect was indescribably pleasant, and I sat, actually spell-bound, listening to the unexpected and, in such a spot, unusual sounds.

Who could it be that was thus warbling a well-remembered song in the heart of the Mongolian mountains?

Dismounting as lightly as possible, I cast the reins over a convenient limb, and, with my rifle at a trail, cautiously advanced, parting the bushes with my right hand, and

with any thing like the requisite clearness. And, moreover, that only the eyes and forehead of the panther were visible above the young girl's head.

But it was the only chance, and with desperate resolve I prepared to take it.

The girl still hung on, her arm, and sometimes her head, keeping time.

The shot had to be made by dropping in the mark, and always an uncertain way. I dared not rise to it, for fear that the trigger might spring a hair's breadth too soon.

Any of my readers who have handled a rifle, will comprehend the difficulty. The piece was at my shoulder, and slowly falling to the mark, when, suddenly, the beast rose slightly, gathered her limbs under her, and, like lightning, shot out from the limb.

At the same instant the rifle cracked, a shrill yell, or screech, followed, and when the smoke drifted—during which time I had heard a heavy fall—I saw both panther and girl upon the ground.

The former was in the throes of death, while the latter was already scrambling to her feet, her face streaming with blood, and her eyes almost starting from their sockets from the terror of the moment.

My ball had sped truly, striking square in the beast's forehead, but the momentum gained by the leap had carried her forward, striking the girl and hurling her from the fork.

The wound from which I had seen the blood streaming—caused by contact with a projecting root—was, fortunately, not of a serious character, and she soon recovered sufficiently to lead the way to her father's cabin, in the clump from whence I had seen the smoke arise.

The girl told the story of her escape, and I was made heartily welcome by the hardy pioneer.

Short Stories from History.

The Story of the Regicides (continued).—One time, when the pursuers were searching the town, the regicides, in shifting their situations, happened to be at the house of a Mrs. Evers, a respectable old lady. She, seeing the enemy coming, ushered her guests out at the back door, who, walking out a little way, instantly returned to the house, and were hid and concealed by her in her apartments. The pursuers coming in, inquired whether the regicides

take your life." The firmness and determination with which he spoke struck the gentleman, who, desisting, exclaimed: "Who can you be? You are either Goffe, Whalley or the devil; for there was no other man in England that could beat me." And so the disguised regicide retired into obscurity, leaving the spectators to enjoy the diversion of the scene, and the vanquishment of the boasting champion. Hence it is proverbial, in some parts of New England, in speaking of a champion at athletic and other exercises, to say that "none can beat him but Goffe, Whalley, or the devil."

From their cave in the woods near New Haven they ventured to the house of one Tomkins, near Milford meeting-house, where they remained two years without ever stirring out. They afterward took a little more liberty, and made themselves known to several persons in whom they could confide.

In 1664 the commissioner from Charles the Second arrived at Boston. On receiving this news they retired to their cave, where they remained eight or ten days. Soon after some Indians, hunting, discovered the cave with the bed, and, the report being spread abroad, rendered it unsafe to continue there any longer. On the 18th of October, 1664, they removed to Hadley, nearly a hundred miles distant, traveling only by night. On their arrival they took up their abode with the Rev. Mr. Russel, who had previously agreed to receive them. At this house, and that of Peter Tilton, Esq., they spent the rest of their lives, for fifteen or sixteen years, in dreary solitude and seclusion from the world. The minister was no sufferer by his boarders, as they received remittances every year from their wives in England, as well as occasional presents from other persons. Goffe, who kept a regular diary during his exile, has recorded donations from several friends. They were in constant terror, though they had reason to hope, after some years, that all inquiry for them was over. They read with pleasure the news of their having been killed in Switzerland; and having exact intelligence of every thing which passed in England, they were unwilling to give up all hopes of deliverance. It is said that their greatest expectations were from the fulfillment of the prophecies, as they had no doubt that the execution of the judges was the slaying of the witnesses. Their lives were miserable burdens, and they complained of being banished from all human society. Goffe corresponded with his wife by the name of Walter Goldsmith, and she as Frances Goldsmith. Their letters, some of which are preserved, strongly describe the distresses of two persons under such peculiar circumstances, who while the inhabitants were assembled in the meeting-house to observe a fast-day; but, fortunately, it had been some time a custom for the men to attend public worship armed. Had the town been taken, the discovery of Whalley and Goffe would have been inevitable. The men took up their arms and attempted a defense, but were soon thrown into confusion, when (as it is related to this day) a stranger suddenly appeared among them, of venerable aspect, and different in his apparel from the inhabitants, who rallied, and, disposing them in the best military manner, led them to the charge, routed the Indians and saved the town. In the moment of victory their deliverer vanished. The inhabitants, unable to account for the phenomenon, believed that they had been commanded by an angel, sent from heaven for their protection. The supposed angel was Goffe, who never before ventured from his concealment in the cave in the woods, nor was it known who had so ably led them against the Indians until after his death.

Goffe and Whalley appear to have been most respected on account of their professions of piety and their grave deportment, by persons who did not approve of their political conduct. Whalley, who became reduced to a state of second childhood, died about the year 1676 or 1678; and Goffe, it is supposed, did not live beyond 1690. His last letter is dated April 2d, 1679.

Abolition of Capital Punishments.—Formerly, in Pennsylvania, death was the penalty for a great variety of offenses; but, in the year 1791, a change in the penal code took place, and, with the exception of premeditated murder, every crime heretofore capital is now punished by a period of confinement, a certain portion of which is solitary. The good effects of this system have been extraordinarily manifested, by a vast diminution both in the number and in the atrocity of the crimes committed. A discharged convict, who had been one of a desperate gang that had long infested Philadelphia before the alteration of the system, called afterward on one of the inspectors of the prison, and addressed him in the following terms: "Mr. —, I have called to return you my thanks for your kindness to me while under sentence, and at the same time to perform a duty which I think I owe to society. You know my conduct and character have been once bad and lost, and therefore, in most matters, what I might say would have little weight; but it is of the feelings of bad men and abandoned characters that I wish to speak to you; and on that point, I believe, you will allow that I may know as much as most people. Be assured then, sir, on the word of one who has offended greatly, but who has suffered for his guilt, and profited much by his suffering, that if you steadily pursue your present plan, you will soon have neither burglaries nor robberies to complain of in Philadelphia." The man then proceeded to describe the sentiments entertained by his old associates in iniquity, and the views and plans on which they commonly acted; and concluded in these words: "The certainty that when detected they must suffer the punishment which the laws have annexed to their offense, and that long and solitary confinement make part of that punishment, does ten times more to deter them from crime than all the hangings with which you before attempted to intimidate them. They fear going to the devil at once a great deal less than being left for days, and months, and years to the silent torture of their own consciences."